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Photo of the year

In a year marked by relatively few major natural disasters (see story, Page 7), this poignant shot, of an elderly woman sitting in a homeless camp in central Italy following a major earthquake in September, was awarded the 1997 Chia Sardinia International Prize for photo of the year. The photograph was taken by AP's Italy photographer Luca Bruno. (AP)

Ministers, MKs call for early elections

Government loses further budget votes

By DAVID HARRIS

Agriculture and Environment Minister Rafael Eitan and Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani called last night for new elections, following the coalition's defeat in two more budget-related votes.

"The government can't function," Eitan said. "To fight against the opposition on the one hand and part of the coalition on the other is a waste of energy. Even if the budget is approved, will everything be okay? We must go to the country and say, 'We haven't succeeded in passing the budget for whatever reasons; you decide what you want.'"

Eitan also gave notice that if elections are advanced, he would run for prime minister at the head of an independent Tsomet list.

Tomorrow afternoon, The Third Way will begin preparing legislation for early elections, Kahalani said. Until now, the party has displayed a responsible attitude and agreed to keep within the framework of the NIS 297.4 billion overall budget, said Kahalani, and that now "We don't want a part in this great embarrassment. The people will decide who they want as their leaders."

Coalition whip Meir Sheetrit (Likud) and Deputy Defense Minister Silvan Shalom also joined the calls for early elections.

"In 20 years I don't remember

[witnessing] such a serious system of blackmail," said Sheetrit. "I've no doubt we have a problem," said Shalom. "Shas and Geshet are fighting for a share of

**Survey: Public pleased with health-law changes, Page 5
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the pot and it appears as though we [in Likud] are the villains."

The principal problem is that legally, a bill to dissolve the Knesset and hold new elections cannot be submitted immediately. Such bills cannot be submitted less than six months apart - not including Knesset recesses - and Meretz MK Haim Oron and Labor MK Haim Ramon submitted such bills, which failed, on July 30. That means the wheels cannot be set in motion until early spring.

As a result, The Third Way is considering introducing a vote of no-confidence as soon as possible, said a party spokeswoman.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's spokesman Shai Bazak said last night that compromises with the coalition parties were likely to be reached overnight.

Labor Party leader Ehud Barak told *The Jerusalem Post* yesterday: "This is definitely the beginning of the end of the Netanyahu government," but added: "I don't want to create a situation in which they [the coalition partners] use us as a tool to get back at him [the prime minister]."

An alternative proposal to early elections was touted by several MKs, most vocally by Communications Minister Limor Livnat, withdrawing the budget in its entirety from the Knesset until a government majority is guaranteed and then resubmitting it at some point before the cut-off date of March 31.

This would also satisfy right-wing MKs such as Ze'ev Begin (Likud) and Michael Kleiner (Geshet), who are linking the budget to the proposed further redeployment in Judea and Samaria.

Rumors in the Knesset suggested that Netanyahu himself is considering withdrawing the budget. However, a senior government source close to Netanyahu played down such suggestions. He said Netanyahu is trying very hard to complete the budget by tomorrow "and his chances are not too bad." The source said the coalition bargaining is "just the usual brinkmanship."

If Netanyahu does decide to withdraw and later resubmit the budget, the monthly budgets for next year will be based on the 1997 total of NIS 188b., divided

by 12 and then inflation adjusted. This would mean a smaller budget for the first three months of 1998 than the current budget proposal allows.

The government lost a series of votes yesterday in the Knesset plenum, leaving Knesset Finance Committee Chairman Avraham Ravitz (United Torah Judaism) with no choice other than to pull the first three chapters of the economic arrangements bill for further discussion in his committee.

The government lost the votes because Geshet MKs voted with the opposition and Yisrael Ba'aliya abstained, as did Health Minister Yehoshua Matza and Moshe Gafni (United Torah Judaism).

Yisrael Ba'aliya held talks throughout the day and last night with Netanyahu and Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman, in which the party insisted it be given written confirmation that its budgetary demands be met. The party said it had given Netanyahu until midnight to agree - particularly to an update in government mortgage aid - after which it would definitely not support the coalition during voting.

By 11 p.m., it was decided that Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein, MK Yurii Stern and Treasury officials would negotiate through the night.

See ELECTIONS, Page 2

Ex-CIA head Deutsch warns of electronic-terrorism challenge

By JAY BUSHNISKY

A new type of "electronic terrorism" might sabotage vital computer systems that control international air traffic, facilitate banking services and regulate electrical power stations, former Central Intelligence Agency director John Deutsch said yesterday in Tel Aviv. "We will have to fight terrorism much more strongly than in the past," Deutsch told a standing-room only audience at Tel Aviv University. "This must be a cooperative venture because terrorism has become an international phenomenon."

Delivering the first annual lecture in memory of the late Dr. Yehoshua Rosenzweig, the noted

jurist and chairman of the Israel Press Council, Deutsch repeatedly described as a total failure the US policy of dual containment which was intended to topple the "rogue regimes" ruling Baghdad and Teheran.

The dual containment concept was originated by the current Assistant Secretary of State for Middle Eastern Affairs Martin Indyk during his earlier stint as a member of the US National Security Council, which preceded his term as US ambassador to Israel.

"It does not have the support of our allies, including France and Japan and especially Russia," said Deutsch. "Saddam Hussein is still in power and Iran sponsors terror-

ism throughout the world while becoming an ever more important source of oil."

Deutsch predicted that the US will have to reevaluate its policy towards Iran - "not just because its new president is more liberal than his predecessors," but because dual containment simply does not work.

He termed Saddam's regime in Iraq "a source of instability in the region" which continues "to sponsor terrorism." Deutsch credited the Israeli intelligence community with having "done much better than the US in judging how far Iraq went in nuclear weapons development."

See CIA, Page 2

It ain't over 'til it's over

Four ministers didn't bother to come to the aid of their government yesterday and stayed away from budget-related votes. Some coalition MKs from Geshet went a step further and actually voted against the government.

This sort of budget drama is unprecedented. The government appears to be coming apart at the seams. Perhaps it really is.

Or, perhaps - as Communications Minister Limor Livnat and coalition whip Meir Sheetrit are convinced - what we are witnessing is nothing but hyped-up last minute haggling and the upping of the ante before the deal is struck.

In the best tradition of the Middle Eastern bazaar, the buyer disgustedly walks out of the shop rejecting the store owner's initial price offer. But the seller knows that it's all posturing, and that the buyer will be back.

Still, as sometimes happens in such tough bargaining, the pose can be misinterpreted and the deal can fall through if one side goes too far. To break this cycle of dicker and bicker, Sheetrit proposed early elections, as did the Third Way and Tsomet factions.

This foiled none of the coalition trouble-makers, who had no doubt that Sheetrit was sent by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu to bully them with the early elections menace. From Yisrael Ba'aliya, Geshet, Tsomet and the NRP the resounding chorus was heard essentially telling Sheetrit: "We are not afraid."

ANALYSIS

By SARAH HONIG

Maybe it was little more than a bargaining tactic. "It's not that the small partners are really eager to face the voter again so soon," suggested Livnat, "they simply know that it's possible for the prime minister to win a three-month extension and as long as he can have that, they know that the moment of truth has yet to arrive." Livnat was referring to the March 31st deadline extension for the final passage of the budget, which is part of the direct-election law.

"At that point, when they will not be able to extort any more," she said, "we should foil them and end the game now by going for the extension immediately. If we still can't pass the budget we can always call elections in April. By then the various blackmailers will know it's no bluff."

Both the options offered by Sheetrit and Livnat are not pleasant for Netanyahu and he bravely sought to reassure all and sundry - himself included, no doubt - that it ain't over 'til it's over. To make sure that he would not be as humiliated by his partners in the crucial votes tomorrow night as he was yesterday, Netanyahu announced he would take charge personally of

negotiations from now on. Presumably he would play good cop to his finance minister's bad cop.

The prime minister could hand out perks to parties such as Yisrael Ba'aliya, which demonstratively joined the coalition renegades yesterday, expecting to partake in the generous hand-outs that are likely to be tossed around as pressure on the prime minister intensifies.

But the pivotal player Netanyahu must reckon with is none other than his arch-nemesis Foreign Minister David Levy. The key to Netanyahu's survival is ironically in the hands of the man who still seethes with resentment towards him.

If Levy is out for revenge no matter what, then Netanyahu is lost. The fact that some Geshet members have already crossed the Knesset lines augurs ill for Netanyahu. But if Levy is merely competing with Shas for the votes of the have-nots, then Netanyahu can still buy his loyalty - for a while at least. Should that happen, and should Levy be eventually perceived as toeing the line, other hagglers will meekly lower their demands. Unfortunately for the prime minister, he can never know for sure.

It's hard to differentiate reality from pretense in the market place. Netanyahu will have to risk calling Geshet's bluff to find out whether Levy wants to strike a deal - or make a fool of him.

Judge reverses publication ban on Gil photo

By GALIT LIPKIS BECK

Tel Aviv District Court President Menahem Eitan yesterday lifted a ban on publishing the photograph of former Mossad agent Yehuda Gil, charged with falsifying information, after his picture appeared in the December 29 issue of *Newsweek*.

The ban was lifted at the request of Yehuda Gil's attorney, Niv Moszar, and the IBA, whose attorney argued that the international news weekly was sold worldwide,

including in Israel.

Gil's picture was published for the first time several weeks ago in the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* and more recently on the Internet. Photographs of the 63-year-old suspect had been banned from appearing in Israeli media initially on the grounds that they could "harm state security."

Gil was charged secretly in November with giving false information to the Mossad with the intention of damaging national security. He also was accused of theft by a civil servant and fraud. Gil's misinformation reportedly involved false assessments about Syria.

The media's attorney Niv Moszar said the publication ban in Israel was absurd given that foreign magazines with pictures of the suspect can be purchased easily on the local market. He pointed out that when the initial ruling on



Yehuda Gil (Reuters)

ban the publication was made, Gil's picture had only appeared in one newspaper, *Corriere della Sera*. He emphasized that the local media respected the initial decision and did not appeal it, but that

circumstances have changed. "It is obvious that when a picture of the man is published in an international newspaper the size of *Newsweek*, which can be purchased in kiosks in Israel, there is no longer any point in the court's refusal to allow the local media to publish his picture. It could make a mockery out of the court order," he said.

Prosecutor Dvora Hen said there was no change in the state's security argument for banning the pictures.

Hen said that lifting the ban could encourage journalists in Israel to test future publication bans by smuggling banned pictures abroad so they can be published.

"I believe that in this case many barriers on publication bans have been broken, and to the best of my knowledge the attorney-general has ordered an investigation of the

issue," said Hen.

Gil's attorney Lior Shapira said his client was in jail under a different name for security reasons. Publication of his picture could harm his security and the trial, Shapira argued.

"The defendant worked for intelligence for more than 20 years and he faces two charges and there are dozens, even thousands of things which he will be identified as having done if his picture is published," Shapira added.

After the ruling, Shapira said he would consider filing a request not to hold the trial behind closed doors.

"If things are going to be published they may as well be published accurately," said Shapira.

In issuing his decision, Eitan said that his personal opinion was that any suspect's photograph should be barred from publication without the suspect's consent.

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NEWS

in brief

TV: PM secretly okays NIS 8m. for settlement

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu secretly approved budgeting NIS 8 million for land development in the Maale Efrat settlement and the construction of 55 housing units in the area, Channel 2 reported last night. Netanyahu reportedly issued his consent during a cabinet tour of West Bank settlements on Sunday. The decision comes despite US pressure for a time-out on settlement building. *Itm*

Officer and soldier wounded in explosion

An IDF soldier was seriously injured and an officer was lightly injured when a hand grenade exploded near them during a training exercise yesterday, the IDF said. The training accident occurred in a base in the South and the soldiers were taken to a hospital for further treatment, the army said. OC Southern Command Maj.-Gen. Yoram Samia has appointed an internal committee of inquiry headed by a colonel to investigate the accident, the army said. *Arieh O'Sullivan*

Three killed in road accidents

Nissim Morel of Beit She'an was killed when his car swerved into a canal between the fish ponds at Kibbutz Kfar Ruppia, near Beit She'an. The car filled with water and sank.

Two people were killed and two others injured yesterday when a truck, while apparently trying to pass another vehicle, overturned into the opposite lane, and another truck hit it head on. The accident occurred near the Tapuah junction in Samaria. A motorcyclist was seriously injured when his motorcycle overturned on Road No. 4, near the Hirya dump. *Itm*

Wakf refuses to accept surveillance equipment

Palestinian Wakf officials in eastern Jerusalem rejected Israeli security authorities' proposal yesterday to install surveillance equipment on the exterior of Al-Aksa Mosque during the feast of Ramadan. The police has warned of possible violence against Palestinians at the Temple Mount by extreme right- and left-wing groups during the Ramadan month. Wakf official Adnan Hussein charged that if the Palestinians carried out the request, police would take advantage of the situation to spy on Muslims instead of monitoring Jewish extremists. Hussein added that Wakf officials would hold Israeli security officials responsible for any violence that breaks out. *Margot Dudkevitch and Mohammed Najib*

Arafat plans a reshuffle

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat yesterday accepted the resignations of 16 cabinet ministers and said that the authority would function as a transition government for another month and a half, pending a reshuffle of portfolios. PA Spokesman Marwan Kanfani said that Arafat agreed to set up a committee with Fatah members to discuss the reshuffle.

Marwan Barghouti, a Fatah legislator from Ramallah, said Arafat also promised to sign 18 of 37 laws drafted by the legislative council, including a free speech guarantee. *Margot Dudkevitch and Mohammed Najib*

Double murder in Umm el-Fahm

Two women were shot dead in an Umm el-Fahm house last night. No further details were available. *Itm*

With sadness we announce the passing of
MENACHEM ROTMAN
on December 27, 1997 in Toronto.
Menachem is survived by
wife Ruth, children Jennie & Irwin Cass,
Joseph & Sandy Rotman, Owen Shime,
10 grandchildren, and 7 great-grandchildren.
Shiva in Toronto. Donations may be made to
Na'amat, or Jerusalem-Elwyn Millie Shime Centre.

With great sorrow we announce the untimely
passing of our member
BARNEY ROD
The funeral will take place today, Tuesday,
December 30, 1997
(1 Tevet 5758) at 3 p.m. at Kfar Blum
The family
Kibbutz Kfar Blum

With a heavy heart we announce the
untimely death of
**JONATHAN (Hacohen)
KAPLAN**
Outstanding son of
George and Betsy Kaplan of Baka, Jerusalem
Husband of Mimi Kaplan, New York City
Brother of Theresa Levine, Atlanta, GA;
Rachel Cohen, Efrat; Ilana Azral, Jerusalem
Friends of the Kaplan Family

The unveiling of the tombstone, on the shloshim of our
beloved mother and grandmother
Prof. ELAINE BERMAN ז"ל
will take place on Friday, January 2, 1998
at Har Hazetim at 12 noon.
We will meet at the upper entrance to the cemetery.
We thank all those who extended condolences.
The Family

Settlers slam group's product ban

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

Outraged settlement leaders yesterday slammed Gush Shalom's attempt to extend its campaign to boycott products made in Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan Heights to international consumers, and thus dry up the export of goods manufactured or grown in these areas.

Yehudit Tayar, spokeswoman for the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza said that the boycott was "antisemitic," reminiscent of lists drawn up by the Nazis when they demanded a boycott of Jewish products.

The boycott was actually initiated by Gush Shalom several months ago, with the left-wing

movement offering a list of settler-made products to facilitate it.

But Tayar said the movement had stepped up its activities to include agricultural products, was now advertising under the slogan "every shekel to the settlements is a shekel against peace," and was standing outside supermarkets, handing out leaflets.

"What would they say if I asked the public to stop buying goods because they were made by Arabs?" said the settlement council's director-general Aharon Domb said.

Domb added that the export of flowers, fruit and vegetables from the settlements bought in approximately \$30,000,000 a year, with millions more earned from local

sales. Gush Shalom published an advertisement in one of the Hebrew dailies on Friday, calling for a nationwide boycott of settlement goods, that was signed by over 70 people, including authors, actors, professors and other public figures.

Israel Radio said the Foreign Ministry feared the ad would prompt anti-Israeli elements in the United Nations to try to initiate a ban on settler products.

Agriculture Center head MK Shalom Simhon (Labor) said that Gush Shalom is a fringe group and that it was a shame the group sought to divide the people during such a sensitive period.

Foreign Ministry official Effi

Ben-Matityahu was quoted as saying "all relevant issues, including settlements, are within the context of our negotiations for a final peaceful settlement and any boycott at this critical time would be in contradiction to the spirit of the peace process."

Liat Collins adds:

MK Alex Lubotzky (Third Way) has written to Labor Party leader Ehud Barak to complain that Labor's Yael Dayan signed the ad calling for a boycott of goods produced by Israeli companies in the territories.

Lubotzky said a careful review of the boycott list revealed that some of the products being boycotted are made in factories that are not over the Green Line and

include some in Azarot within Jerusalem's municipal boundaries. Lubotzky said the ad, which was also published on the Internet, "violates laws against discriminating against a person because of where he lives and could also be considered seditious, inciting against a specific community."

He called on Barak to publicly condemn it.

On Sunday, Lubotzky asked Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon to remove Dayan as chairwoman of the Knesset Committee on the Status of Women, saying the position called for being sensitive to the needs of all minorities.

Dayan said in response she had signed the ad as a private individual with personal views.

Sharon takes Yuval Rabin on a West Bank tour

"I didn't come here to convert you to my political beliefs, but to explain some of what I consider to be important principles for a permanent settlement," National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon told members of Dor Shalom, on a tour of West Bank settlements yesterday.

Yuval Rabin, son of the late Yitzhak Rabin and Dor Shalom's leader, participated in the tour.

Sharon said he intended to show them which areas are vital to the country's security. He has reportedly drawn up maps which would have Israel holding onto two-thirds of the West Bank in a final peace deal.

Dor Shalom members complained that Sharon's map was not drawn up with any Palestinian input. They also alleged that Israel wasn't holding any real dialogue with the Palestinians.

Rabin said that government policies should aim to "create conditions in which there are no more reasons for hostility and hatred between us and the Arab world."

Sharon said it was important to inform the Palestinians of the government's views, even if the Palestinians disagreed with them.

Dor Shalom leaders raised the issue of the expenses involved in paving bypass roads to settlements.

Movement spokesman Oren Yehi-Shalom said that "there were some deep arguments with the



With pointer in hand, National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon (right) stands with Yuval Rabin (far right), son of the late Yitzhak Rabin, while leading a tour for Rabin's 'Dor Shalom' peace group in the West Bank yesterday. *(Shalom Buchacho)*

national infrastructure minister, but the tour was important to study the problems and positions."

Sharon stressed that his map set crucial security areas and that there were no intentions of moving any settlements, Yehi-

Shalom said. The tour stressed the seam-line areas between the West Bank and Israel, and included visits to

Peduel and Beit Aryeh, and the Jordan Valley, where the group visited Ma'aleh Ephraim. *(News agencies)*

Palestinian mothers to PA: Release our sons from jail

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

Women and children yesterday demanded the release of their husbands and fathers, who had been arrested by the Palestinian Authority following the suicide bombings in Jerusalem in July and September. The PA arrested Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists following Israel's demands that the PA combat terrorism and arrest suspected activists.

As the US and Israel continue to pressure PA Chairman Yasser Arafat to combat terrorism, he faces growing resentment over Palestinians being kept in prison without being charged.

"In the past, I thought that when the Palestinian Authority came everything would be better and that my son would not be arrested again, but I found the

opposite to be true," Fadwa Darwazi said at the protest in Nablus yesterday. Her 21-year-old son Motassin is imprisoned in the local jail.

While Arafat has promised Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin that every case would be reviewed, some of the mothers charged their sons were not receiving medical attention or the proper care.

Meanwhile, Fatah activists held rallies yesterday in Kalanidiya, Hebron and Ramallah marking the 33rd year since the movement was established. Scores of men in military dress, holding weapons and wearing keffiyehs, marched through the streets.

In the Kalanidiya refugee camp north of Jerusalem, hundreds followed the parade that ended in the local cemetery, where leaders lay wreaths at the graves of two Fatah activists killed during the intifada.

US welcomes Norway peace move

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The United States yesterday welcomed a new Norwegian initiative to spur Mideast peace and said it did not view that move as competition with Washington's role.

Norway's foreign minister said on Saturday he was planning a trip to the Middle East to serve as a broker in the deadlocked peace effort Israel and the Palestinians.

"The Norwegians have long played an extremely helpful role in the Middle East peace process, and so we would certainly welcome their continued efforts," State Department deputy spokesman James Foley told reporters.

He said that the European Union at its recent summit noted the "importance of the central role of the United States in the Middle

East peace process and pledged to continue to work with us cooperatively. That's always been, I think, the hallmark of their efforts...a parallelism with our own. So we don't see any competition if you will," he told a news briefing.

Foley said he did not know if the foreign minister, Knut Vollebak, had informed Washington in advance of his plans to make the trip.

CIA

Continued from Page 1

Turning to the peace process, Deutsch said the US government and the American people expected more progress in the short run.

"I'm concerned about the gap in expectations in Washington about where the peace process is going," he said.

He stressed that "US leadership is essential for progress." But he expressed "worry" that the US may not show the requisite leadership. He said, however, that US interests require a strong Israel in the region.

Deutsch, who headed the CIA until last December, had no prob-

lem with CIA personnel being involved in security discussions between Israel and the Palestinians. "To the extent that they are helping out, I'm for it," he said.

Itemizing the major threats facing the US in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse, the MIT chemistry professor put post-communist Russia at the top of his list.

One reason for this was Russia's possession of "20,000 nuclear weapons" which must be guarded constantly, thereby incurring a cost that may exceed the Russian government's means.

Another reason was the existence of a "criminal element" in contemporary Russia whose long-term impact on the general public could prompt it to revert to a hard-

line, "conservative" regime similar to that of the Bolsheviks or Stalinists.

Despite this threat and others, Deutsch believes "the world is a better and safer place than it was 10 years ago," for various reasons, including the "generally good" economic growth experienced by the world community during the past five years.

"This is a time of Pax Americana," Deutsch said. "It requires that the US be in the forefront, coping with tough foreign policy issues and showing leadership." But he expressed doubt as to whether these qualities will manifest themselves "during the second Clinton administration."

ELECTIONS

Continued from Page 1

Sheerit yesterday asked Labor budget-debate coordinator Haggai Merom that his party vote with the coalition on the budget as it was originally submitted; in that way all coalition demands could be rejected. Merom refused.

Labor is working to delay the vote until at least next week, said the party's chief economics spokesman Avraham Shohat.

Chanel 1 reported last night that Ramon and Foreign Minister David Levy had met to discuss the

latest developments. Barak said he continues to maintain contact with other parties such as The Third Way, but had not stepped these up following the threat that the government might fall over the budget.

"Meanwhile, what we've seen in recent days is unprecedented," Barak said.

Meretz leader Yossi Sarid likened Netanyahu's daily battles to a permanent sauna, in which "he strips and sweats, then they whip him with palm fronds."

Members of the Knesset Finance Committee decided yesterday morning to take matters into their

own hands, when the Treasury tried to reintroduce a NIS 500 million cut to child allowances. Instead, the MKs insisted on a 0.26 percent across-the-board cut, which equals NIS 200m. - NIS 500m., alongside a NIS 150m. saving in unemployment benefit payments and NIS 50m. in non-updating of senior civil servant pay, among other cuts.

"This time we are going to impose cuts, rather than request additional [savings from the Treasury]," said Ravitz.

Liat Collins contributed to this report.

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German terror suspect's mother asks forgiveness

By MARGOT DUKENWITZ and DOUGLAS DAVIS

In the midst of frantic efforts to raise funds to cover her son's defense, Karen Wicks, the mother of suspected terrorist Stefan Josef Smyrek, told *The Jerusalem Post* yesterday she doubted she would be able to attend her son's next remand hearing on January 4.

"I would like to tell the people in Israel how sorry I am for what my son has done," she said.

Wicks, who lives in England, got the first hint something was amiss when her daughter called her from Germany on Friday.

"Last Friday my daughter called to tell me that a news report on German television claimed a 26-year-old German suspected of being sent by the Hizbullah to carry out a terrorist attack in Israel had been arrested by the Israeli authorities," she said.

The following day on satellite television, the story unfolded before her eyes. "I was shocked; I couldn't believe what I was seeing," she said.

The last time she saw her son, she said, was in May, when she travelled to Braunschweig, Germany to visit him. She said she was shocked by his appearance.

"I didn't recognize him, he had changed and behaved very strange-

ly," she recalled. "I knew that he had converted to Islam in 1993 and he had studied and spoke Arabic, and even asked me to call him Abdul Karim, but I refused, telling him to me he will always be Stefan."

During the May visit, Wicks said her son told her that he wanted to break off all contact and that he planned to go away. When she questioned him, she said, he handed her a copy of the Koran in German and advised her to read it in order to gain a better understanding of what he felt.

Wicks said she probed, asking him where he was going, but all he said to her was "you better not know where I am going or what I am going to do." If she had known, Wicks said, she would have contacted the authorities immediately.

Wicks described her son as a loner, easily led and slightly naive, who had a tendency to get into trouble.

"He is not a monster," she said, saying a real change in his personality began after his conversion to Islam. Shortly after he converted, Smyrek became involved with an Egyptian girl, but the romance ended abruptly after the girl's father intervened and forbade his daughter to continue seeing him.

Wicks, who married her third husband in 1991, said she left

Germany for the UK that year. Smyrek, she said, was born in Detmold, Germany, the son of a German iron worker. The couple divorced in 1978 and shortly after she met a British soldier stationed in England. From 1982 to 1987, she said, Smyrek attended boarding school in England, staying with his father, and then returned to Germany, where he had his own apartment. From 1989 to 1993, she said, he served in the German Army and then worked in odd jobs.

Currently working at part-time cleaning jobs, Wicks said that because the news of her son's arrest broke over the Christmas holiday, many of her friends and neighbors are still unaware of what had happened. She said she tried to sell the story to a German newspaper but didn't know where she would get the money from to pay for her son's legal fees.

Meanwhile Smyrek's lawyer, Daniel Assan, visited his client on Sunday and plans to meet up with

him again later in the week. Assan said that during the meeting he translated and showed him the articles that appeared in the local media.

Smyrek, he said, suffered from bronchitis and was not used to the local medication the prison authorities had given him. Assan said Smyrek had caused some trouble, demanding to be let out into the prison yard for an hour each day.

"He threw water in his cell and knocked on the bars, injuring his hand," said Assan. "I hope they will allow him to go into the yard and breathe fresh air."

He added he had spoken with Smyrek's mother on the telephone and it was not clear if she planned to come to Israel, but that he hoped the authorities will permit Smyrek to meet with his relatives.

Assan refused to discuss the legal fees, saying only that "neither the German Embassy, Israel or Hizbullah will be paying the fee."



Hanukka happenings

Delegates to the World Emunah convention celebrate Hanukka with children at the Emunah-sponsored recreation center in Jerusalem's Neveh Ya'acov neighborhood yesterday. The convention opened Sunday night. (Efraim Kishitok)

Hizbullah: We had a double agent in Mossad

BEIRUT - Hizbullah claimed yesterday that it had infiltrated the Mossad by operating a double agent who fed Israel disinformation for more than a year.

At a news conference in south Beirut, Hizbullah presented a bearded man named Moussa Zein, 29, who told reporters he had worked with the Mossad under the alias Albert Bylos and returned to Lebanon eight months ago.

The IDF denied knowledge of any such infiltration.

Hizbullah spokesman Nayef Koraim said that Zein "successfully carried out wide disinformation operations for some time." He hailed the infiltration as "one of Hizbullah's most important security victories against the Zionist enemy." He said Zein provided Israel with information on alleged Hizbullah operatives in Europe.

Zein said he was captured by IDF and South Lebanese Army troops on the edge of the security zone in Lebanon in July 1992 and spent the next three years in an Israeli prison.

In 1995, he said, he agreed to work for the Mossad. Zein said he managed to contact Hizbullah from

prison through a Palestinian guerrilla. The group sent him instructions to join the Mossad.

"After special training, they [Israelis] gave me an Israeli passport with the name Albert Bylos and I was sent to southeast Asia within a specific project supervised by the Israeli Embassy there and two Mossad officers: Hanan and Jabar," Zein said.

But he claimed he remained in contact with Hizbullah, which passed him misleading information to be fed to the Israelis. Zein said he also misled the Israelis into believing that he had been a bodyguard of Hizbullah chief Abbas Musawi, who was killed in an IDF helicopter gunship attack in southern Lebanon in February 1992.

Zein stayed in Thailand for nine months before moving to Europe and then secretly returning to Lebanon. Even then, he claimed, he continued telephone contacts with Israeli officers under Hizbullah supervision. Koraim said Hizbullah decided to reveal his true identity now because his mission had served its purpose. (News agencies)

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HEBREW PRESS REVIEW

By ORLY AHARONI

Budget debate

The Hebrew press has been focusing on the most prominent participants in the budget negotiations and what could happen if the Treasury surrenders to the various parties' demands.

Yedioth Aharonot's Sever Plotzker states that Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman is debating whether to remain in the government or resign, amid the demands to alter and increase the scope of the budget. Plotzker adds that Neeman does not wish to be identified with an economy that goes sour as a consequence of policies forced upon him.

Ma'ariv's Shalom Yerushalmi agrees that "Neeman is the tragic figure in the budget affair," following many slips in the past few months that cost Neeman his prestige and gave him the "destructive image of an anti-social minister."

"From all the budget complications, the competition between the Geshet Party and Shas is the most troublesome," *Ha'aretz's* Avraham Tal claims, adding that these factions are competing for the votes of more or less the same people.

"Shas' achievements are those that propelled the populist drive of Foreign Minister [David Levy] as far as threatening resignation," Tal writes, adding that if a crisis is inevitable "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should go to elections proudly and avoid lending a hand in destroying the economy."

Ma'ariv's Gabi Kessler states that the compromises over the budget "promises that 1998... will be a wasted year... perhaps recession and unemployment will even worsen."

Extremists raise their heads

Ma'ariv's Yosef Lapid calls to put an end to the "insane group running wild, before it ignites the whole region," referring to right-wing extremist Avigdor Eskin's arrest on suspicion he had planned

to throw a pig's head into a crowd of Moslems praying at the Temple Mount. He adds that, unfortunately, fascism also raised its head among the Left this week, referring to an ad calling for a national boycott on products from the settlements. This call is "a new chapter in an old book on antisemitism, beginning in the Middle Ages and whose climax is in boycotting the Jewish stores in the days of the Nazis," he writes.

Moshe Zak, also of *Ma'ariv*, attacks the police for publicizing the event, thus giving Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat a reason to incite against Israel.

"These systems must thwart any attempt to harm the holy sites, but they must behave wisely and quietly," he writes, "without volunteering an indirect confirmation of Arafat's inciting remarks."

A year of hatred

In *Ha'aretz's* supplement last week, Ari Shavit attempted to explore the reasons for the extreme hatred of Netanyahu. Shavit concluded that the Left is expressing causeless hatred because it could not accept the fact that the majority of Israelis rejected the Left's idea of peace. This week the press is challenging Shavit's statements.

Yedioth's Barnea agrees that some of the hatred is baseless and vile and states that "only fools both in the Left and the Right can 'hate' Netanyahu." The prime minister's problem is the "lack of respect that he inspires" from both sides due to his small lies, Barnea says.

"Despite my sorrow over the vileness of his critics, Netanyahu will rise and fall, not over a word from the Left, but over his own word."

Dan Margalit in *Ha'aretz* states that Shavit's hatred theory is off, not because of what Labor leader Ehud Barak or Meretz leader Yossi Sarid feel toward Netanyahu, but because top MKs and ministers from his own coalition, in addition to foreign leaders, distrust him.

Gov't plans jubilee events for immigrants

By ELLI WOHLGELERTER

In an effort to include and place emphasis on the country's immigrants, the Absorption Ministry has embarked on a year-long program of 24 events to help celebrate the state's 50th anniversary.

Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein said yesterday that the ministry decided to organize these activities itself, after concluding that the committee organizing the national celebrations is not doing enough to include immigrants.

"We decided that we were not going to have a very expensive and huge celebration and that's it," Edelstein said. "We are going to have 24 different events all over the country, most of them in the peripheral areas and the development towns, where the majority of new immigrants live."

Edelstein said the budget for the year-long celebrations will come to NIS 2.5 million, to come from the ministry's regular budget. The money will go to underwrite new-immigrant concerts, performances and art shows, as well as an "aliyada," a sports competition for new immigrants, to be held in Lod.

"All the celebrations of the Absorption Ministry are with the participation of new immigrants - artists, sportsmen, performers," Edelstein said. "It's a good way for them to get exposure in Israel, a good way for them to get paid, and a very good way for them to become more acquainted with their Israeli counterparts, with Israeli producers. I sincerely hope that these celebrations will not only be a nice party but will also be a new start for new immigrants."

The programs in the development towns, where more than 100,000 immigrants have settled since the late 1980s, will include the opening special cultural houses that will continue operating after the jubilee celebrations are over.

Edelstein said that he wanted to make immigrants the focus of the 50th anniversary celebration from



Vaknin family members light Hanukkah candles at an event for olim sponsored by the Absorption Ministry at the International Conference Center in Jerusalem.

the beginning. "The previous organizers wanted to supply buses for immigrants to come see the performances, and that's the exact opposite of what we are trying to do in this office," he said.

His original idea was to centralize the celebrations around the theme

of the ingathering of the exiles, which he suggested to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over a year ago.

"I said that if we would put the issue of the ingathering of the exiles as the central issue of the 50th anniversary, I think that we could really get the whole country

involved. Unfortunately my suggestion was never answered positively.

"We decided that the way out of that situation is to start a program of our own, and it turned out that once we had specific plans we could run relatively cheap programs that could be very important for new immigrants."

Dinitz demands \$1 million in trial expenses

By MICHAL YUDELMAN

Former Jewish Agency chairman Simcha Dinitz, who was acquitted on an appeal to the Supreme Court of defrauding the agency of some \$22,000, has asked the agency to reimburse him for \$1 million in trial expenses.

He said Sunday that his request was under negotiation and that if it was rejected, he may sue.

Dinitz was acquitted on October 14 of charges of using the agency's credit card for personal purchases, and having the agency

cover expenses he charged to his own credit card at the Sims department store in New York. Dinitz said that "according to regulations the JA should take part in covering the trial expenses."

But agency sources expressed anger at the request, maintaining that Dinitz had tainted their image and damaged morale.

Dinitz resigned during his trial, after taking a leave of absence in 1994.

In finding for Dinitz, two justices accepted his appeal of a NIS 40,000 fine decided by the Jerusalem District Court which found him guilty of using an agency card for personal

expenses. The justices also upheld Dinitz's acquittal on another charge of misusing funds, which the state had appealed.

"We are talking about [personal] expenses [paid for by Dinitz with his work credit cards] which were not hidden from the eyes of officials and treasurers at the Jewish Agency," wrote Justice Theodor Or in his majority opinion, joined by Justice Shlomo Levine.

A minority opinion by Justice Dalia Dornier held that even if Dinitz did not mean to cheat the agency, he had "used his position to obtain privileges to which he was not entitled."

PM's links with US Jubilee c'tee under fire

By BATSHEVA TSUR and JAY BUSHINSKY

A left-wing Knesset Member yesterday accused the Prime Minister's Office of approving \$300,000 for US organizers of jubilee celebrations who supported Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's election campaign.

MK Ran Cohen (Meretz) alleged that the amount was not approved by Yitzhak Mordechai, the head of the public committee organizing 50th anniversary events. He added that Mordechai's predecessor, Yossi Peled, has asked the State Comptroller and the Knesset State Control Committee to investigate.

The Prime Minister's Office denied the allegations, and said that expenses incurred by the US committee had been properly documented and were justified.

A senior government source called Cohen's charges "the height of chutzpa." He said that the contributors said to have been reimbursed, Merv Adelson and Marvin Josephson, were "volunteers" who laid out their own money to get the jubilee project moving and asked for nothing more than to be reimbursed.

The source also dismissed Cohen's charges that Adelson and Josephson were "apparently heavy

contributors to Netanyahu's election campaign," saying such assertions were ludicrous, spurious and irrelevant.

Cohen alleged on Israel Radio that "at a time when there is no money for health, when pensioners are being roughly treated, the Prime Minister's Office is throwing around millions of shekels to people for whom such payment appears to be most suspicious."

"There is a public body that has been empowered to make these decisions. It decided not to pay [the Americans] because the expenses submitted were apparently private expenses. How can the Prime Minister's Office skirt the public body when [Netanyahu] is an involved party?" Cohen added.

Shimon Stein, legal adviser to the Prime Minister's Office, said he had "met their auditor and he showed us beautifully organized files detailing every item. We inspected them... and were convinced beyond all doubt that they met with all the demands."

Stein said that the cabinet had approved of the US committee and that "every cent is accounted for."

He added that the Americans had not filed for expenses for some \$170,000 that they spent on flights and hotels.

Czech-German fund for Nazi victims to be set-up

PRAGUE (AP) - The Czech and German governments agreed yesterday to establish a binational fund to compensate Czech victims of Nazi persecution and ethnic Germans expelled from Czechoslovakia in the aftermath of World War II.

The agreement was reached by Czech Foreign Minister Jaroslav Sedivy and German Ambassador to Prague Anton Rossbach, ending a yearlong dispute over compensation, the news agency CTK reported. It quoted Sedivy as saying administration of the fund will begin next month.

In Bonn, government spokesman Herbert Schmulling said the accord paves the way for creation of the fund for Nazi victims and the establishment of a permanent forum to promote German-Czech dialogue.

Last January, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Czech Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus signed a declaration aimed at easing tensions left by the 1939 German occupation of Czechoslovakia and the postwar expulsion of about 2.5 million ethnic Germans from the border regions known as Sudetenland.

That document, however, failed to mention the 80,000 Jews from the regions of Bohemia and Moravia who perished in Nazi concentration camps and did not address demands that Germany pay individual compensation. Instead, it laid down creation of a joint fund for the future. Germany is to pay \$79m into the fund, and the Czechs \$3m.

The fund will mostly finance projects for victims of the Nazis. But it will also be used to preserve monuments and cemeteries, "to support minorities" and "to promote youth exchanges, Schmulling said.

In the Czech Republic, some 9,000 survivors, including 2,000 Jews, would be eligible for compensation.



Stamp honors Habad's Chernobyl children project

By JUDY SIEGEL

In a rare tribute to the contribution of a private, non-governmental organization, the Postal Authority is today issuing a special postage stamp honoring the Habad Children of Chernobyl organization, which since 1990 has brought 1,527 Jewish children to Israel from areas in the former Soviet Union affected by radioactive fallout.

The colorful stamp, designed by Bezalel Academy graduate Eli Carmil, will be unveiled in a ceremony in the Knesset auditorium today. It will be attended by Communications Minister Limor Livnat, Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert, and Postal Authority and Philatelic Service officials, along with Children of Chernobyl officials Rabbi Yosef Aronov and Yossi Raichik.

Livnat praised the idea for the stamp because of the Habad project's "unique contribution to aiding Jewish children who are at extreme risk because of the radiation released from the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster."

Israel becomes the 22nd country to honor the Habad project with a postage stamp. In April, the UN honored Habad Children of Chernobyl in an unveiling ceremony by representatives of 21 countries and featuring UN Undersecretary-General Yasushi Akashi, Nobel laureate Eli Wiesel and Academy Award-winning actor Jon Voight.

The NIS 2.10 stamp shows children disembarking from one of 32 flights to Israel to date. The flights continue to arrive regularly; the latest plane landed on December 19. The children live on campuses in Kfar Habad which meet their unique medical, dietary and educational needs, and in most cases are joined in Israel later by their parents. So far, more than 1,000 families from the Ukraine, Belarus and western Russia have come on aliya because of the program.

The Habad program has also helped thousands of families of all ethnic and religious groups by sending tons of medical supplies and food into the contaminated areas.

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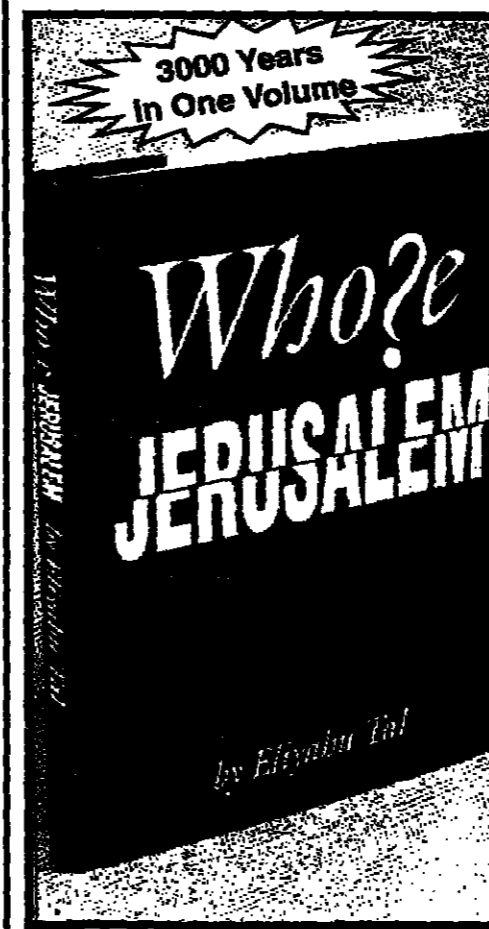
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Ben-Ari petitions for his release

By BATSHEVA TSUR

Zvi Ben-Ari, formerly known as Gregory Lerner, who is charged with some of the gravest economic crimes in the history of the state, has petitioned the High Court of Justice to release him from custody. Ben-Ari has been in prison for almost nine months. His lawyer, Yoram Sheftel, told the court yesterday that much of the prosecution's case is based on "fictitious" testimony from witnesses in Russia and that there is therefore no justification for keeping his

client behind bars.

Ben-Ari has been charged with aggravated fraud and other economic crimes totalling \$100 million. The court has several times upheld the state's request not to release him until the end of legal proceedings, for fear he will flee the country.

Ben-Ari is charged with committing bank fraud in Israel, Russia and other parts of Europe. The state has reportedly brought evidence against him from numerous witnesses in Russia. But Sheftel said yesterday that these witnesses are



Zvi Ben-Ari
Isaac Harari

lying and that they would refuse to come to Israel to testify.

Sheftel, who represented John Demjanjuk, accused of being Ivan the Terrible from the Treblinka death camp, said that the state would not be able to bring many witnesses from Russia to give evidence here, as had happened during the Demjanjuk trial. Demjanjuk was eventually acquitted on appeal by the Supreme Court, which said there was reasonable doubt regarding the evidence against him.

"The evidence from Russia is fictitious. Almost all the witnesses

there have said they are not prepared to come to give evidence and there is no way to force them to do so," Sheftel said. "Our court system has already had had and bitter experience with evidence from Russia in the Demjanjuk case."

He added that some of the evidence against Ben-Ari "does not in any way point to stealing money, but rather to returning it."

The prosecution, however, continued yesterday to contend that Ben-Ari must remain behind bars. Justice Eliezer Goldberg will issue his ruling at a later date.

Australian Zionist Federation head:

Australia's ties to Israel not hurt by Maccabiah

By LIAT COLLINS

The traditional strong relationship between the Australian Jewish community and Israel has not been hurt by the Maccabiah disaster but there is a great deal of anger towards the Maccabi organization, according to Ron Weiser, head of the Australian Zionist Federation.

Weiser led a delegation to the Knesset yesterday, where meetings were held with Immigration and Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein and Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon.

Weiser said about 250 people immigrate to Israel annually from Australia and the figures have increased slightly over the last two to three years. About 10 percent of the community has made aliya.

"We are very much in favor of aliya and we in the federation push it very much. It's an honored thing in the community and the olim [new immigrants] are admired."

The Australians also asked Edelstein about the conversion bill. The minister said his party, Yisrael Ba'aliya, supports the compromises being proposed by the Neeman Commission.

"We are a pluralistic community and live well together in Australia. It is our decision that pluralism is something to be desired. We are not a country of extremes," Weiser said.

Tichon elicited a chuckle when he gave a review of the Israeli parliamentary system. After noting it is the only democracy in the Middle East he summed up by saying: "There are 120 Knesset Members and more than 5 million politicians."



Ron Weiser, head of the Australian Zionist Federation (right), with Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon in the Knesset yesterday.
(Isaac Harari)

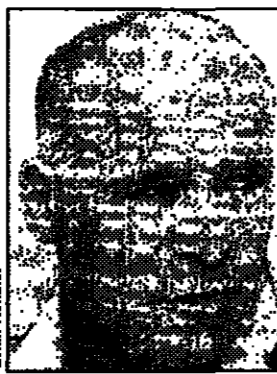
Hefetz warns of rise in organized crime

By BATSHEVA TSUR and Itim

Elements of organized international crime are attempting to infiltrate Israeli society, outgoing Police Insp.-Gen. Assaf Hefetz said yesterday. He warned that they were trying to influence Israeli politics and called on politicians to be wary, especially when accepting contributions for their election campaigns.

Hefetz was speaking at a ceremony at the Justice Ministry, where he took leave of Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein and State Attorney Edna Arbel.

In order to strengthen the ability



Outgoing Commissioner Hefetz. Criminals seeking political clout

to fight serious crimes, there should be a central investigations unit in every district, Hefetz suggested. He said that in the past few years the police had placed emphasis on operations rather than on investigations.

Rubinstein and Arbel both called for strengthening the investigative arm of the police, saying that it currently suffers from a lack of manpower. The government should budget extra funds to overcome the manpower problem, Arbel said. There has been a marked rise in crime, she noted, and the government should therefore give the investigative branch priority.

Meanwhile, the number of thefts dropped by 40-50 percent during closures of the West Bank and Gaza, Cmdr. Yossi Levy told students of the Ramat Gan law school yesterday.

He said that the public had filed 440,000 complaints with police in 1997, and criminal files were opened for 320,000 of those. Levy, who heads the police investigations division, said that 80 percent of the files involved theft.

As the peace process moves forward, Levy told the students, he believed priorities must be established for the police with an emphasis on fighting crime, as well as fighting terror.

Expert: Marinas, ports put swimmers at risk

By JUDY SIEGEL

Israel's shores, where 73 people drowned this year, are becoming more dangerous because of the construction of ports and marinas. This building activity, warns Ben-Gurion University geographer Dr. Daniel Hartman, causes powerful eddies and tides that endanger swimmers.

The number of people who drowned this year was 20% higher than in 1996; in addition to the 73 fatalities, there were hundreds of other saved from drowning.

Hartman reported to the Israel Geographics Society, which met in Beersheba yesterday, that even though the number of drowning victims is now more than one-tenth the number of road accident deaths, the problem gets much less attention from the authorities.

Among those groups at high risk for drowning are new immigrants, foreign workers, rural Arabs, haredim and children.

"They are not aware of the dangers the sea poses, and they have inadequate information about and experience at swimming. A large number of those who drown didn't listen to life-guard's instructions and swam at unguarded beaches and in dangerous sea conditions," Hartman said.

He added that conditions have become worse in recent years due to "drastic changes" in Israel's stretch of the Mediterranean coast. The building of marinas, ports, docks and free-standing breakwaters have blocked the supply of sand to the beaches, which are becoming more narrow, and the drop into the sea is becoming deeper. He warned that this situation will only worsen.

The potential loss of life and the importance of the beaches to recreation and tourism require giving this matter national priority, said the geographer. "Immediate steps must be taken to study the problem and find ways to protect the beaches, as well as a massive investment in educating the public, including foreign workers and tourists," he said.

Survey: Public pleased with health-law changes

By JUDY SIEGEL

The national health insurance system, which on Thursday marks its third anniversary and which the Treasury wants to effectively roll back, has received very high marks from the public.

A new survey conducted by the IDC-Brookdale Institute found that 91% of the public is "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their health fund, compared to 83% in 1995. Perhaps better, more accessible health care is responsible for the surprising finding that 76% of those queried in the new survey said their health was good or very good, compared to 69% who thought so in 1995.

The respondents' main complaint was that they were paying more for health care. In 1995, one-fifth said health taxes were too burdensome, while this year, 24% said this was so.

The survey, released yesterday, found that satisfaction with the professional level of family doctors rose from 81% in 1995 ago to

87% today; of specialists from 78% to 89%; nurses' attitudes towards patients from 86% to 89%; lab services from 78% to 84%; the variety of medications from 72% to 77%; and cleanliness and maintenance of facilities from 93% to 96%.

The survey was conducted in Hebrew, Arabic and Russian between August and October of this year among 1,084 Israelis over the age of 22. Demographic variables, including age, sex, education and personal assessment of their health were controlled in the study.

Over 80% of those asked agreed to answer questions, which were aimed at examining changes in satisfaction and quality of services since the National Health Insurance Law took effect.

Two out of five said their health fund's services had improved, compared to the previous year, and only 9% said they had declined. Arabic-speaking residents more often noticed improvements, while Russian-speaking residents were less likely to report improvements.

The highest satisfaction expressed by the general population related to maintenance of health fund facilities, the attitude of the family doctor and of the nurses, while the lowest marks were given to the variety of medications (77% satisfaction), the ease of getting referrals and commitments to pay for specialists and tests (79%) and the attitudes of clerks (82%).

The queues are also shorter: 67% waited less than a quarter of an hour to see their family doctor in 1997, compared to 59% in 1995; 66% were to get an appointment with a specialist within a week in 1997, compared to 56% in 1995.

Preventive medicine also received a boost from the national health insurance system: in 1997, 25% of women over 50 underwent mammograms during the previous two years, while in 1995, only 7% of the relevant age group had had a breast scan during the previous two years. Doctors were also more likely to test patients routinely for their blood pressure.

Zissmann: Long school day to start Jan. 1

By LIAT COLLINS

Knesset Education Committee Chairman Emanuel Zissmann (Third Way) said yesterday he is sure that the long school day will start on January 1.

"I note with satisfaction that the educational revolution - the long school day - has begun. Although the operation of the long school day system throughout the country will be spread out over several years, it will begin operating January 1 in 99 communities, including development towns, border settlements and Arab villages,

and will encompass 15 percent of schoolchildren," Zissmann said.

He said he recommended that the Education Ministry reach an agreement with the Teachers' Association and the Union of Local Authorities in Israel and also involve parents in the plans.

Education Minister Benzion Dell made similar statements yesterday at the Knesset Education Committee meeting on the topic.

"It is clear to me that there are certain difficulties in beginning to implement the long school day on January 1, and I have no doubt there also will be difficulties in the

future, but the Education Ministry, and all those who are involved with the project, must do everything possible to launch the project on the path that has been planned," Dell said.

Dell lashed out at the long school day's critics, noting that it is easy to find problems. Despite these problems, he said, Education Minister Zevulun Hammer is committed to starting the long school day on Thursday, and not postponing it until September 1. He estimated that 90% of the schools involved in the program would begin it on Thursday.

Zissmann said the activities of the Karev Foundation, which operates after-school activities in peripheral and development towns, will be integrated into the long school day in those places where it comes into effect. Elsewhere, the Karev activities will continue as before.

The Education Ministry will make an effort to help towns which have received approval for the long school day but find it difficult to get organized. If this does not work, the hours will be given to a different, similar town which can operate it.

NEWS

in brief

Labor to elect faction chairman today

The Labor faction in the Knesset is expected to hold its elections today for a faction chairman to replace Ra'anan Cohen, who on Sunday was elected party secretary-general. MKs Dalila Itzik and Elie Goldschmidt are running for the post. The faction chairman is in charge of party discipline.

At the faction meeting yesterday, Cohen said the faction will meet in the coming days "to examine what type of party we want." He emphasized that the faction would work together and complimented Eli Dayan, who he beat in the contest for the secretary-general post.

Liav Collins

Presidential election set for March 4

The elections for president are scheduled to be held March 4 in the Knesset. Deputy Speaker Shevah Weiss said yesterday. The candidates are current incumbent Ezer Weizman, Ben-Gurion University Prof. Yirmiyahu Branover, Likud MK and Migdal Ha'emek Mayor Shaul Amur and former Likud MK and former Knesset speaker Dov Shilansky.

Liav Collins

Steep rise in illegal entries

There has been a dramatic rise in the number of arrests of people found to be staying in the country illegally. A report released yesterday by the Ministry of Public Security said more than 91,000 people were arrested or detained for illegal entry in 1997 in May-November, a figure that represents a 250 percent rise over 1996. Of those arrested, said the report, 15,400 were tried and convicted.

Commenting on the report, Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani stressed that a way must be found to reduce the number of foreign workers in Israel and to find a permanent solution that would allow Palestinians to take their place.

Jerusalem Post staff

Hiriya closure postponed

The decision to close the Hiriya garbage dump and move the waste from the central region to the South has been postponed for another three weeks. In principle, the government has decided the huge landfill near Ben-Gurion International Airport should be closed at the end of this year.

The Environment Ministry is insisting the alternative site should be Duda'im, near Beersheba, but local residents have objected. The interministerial committee which was meant to make the formal decision by week, postponed it by three weeks in order to examine alternative sites.

Liav Collins

First internet case before High Court

For the first time, an Internet-related case has come up in court. Haifa resident Avraham Noy yesterday petitioned the High Court of Justice against the Israeli Internet Association and the Communications Ministry, saying they had refused to recognize 20 Internet sites that he wanted to register.

The association is a joint venture of several universities and the ministry and is the sole body that has the right to register sites, in return for a fee. It will register a maximum of 10 sites per person or group. Noy claimed, in his petition, that the association had not been empowered by law to register the sites and that it was monopolistic.

Itim

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Tuesday Jan. 27

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Monday Feb. 2

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BIBLE

Led by Bible scholar Arle Salomon, this new Shorashim tour links names with places - Joshua, Gideon, Even Ha'ezar, Mt. Gilboa, the Midianites, and many more. Visiting the sites while reading from the sources will bring their stories into focus. A tour not to be missed. NIS 225 including lunch. Tour guide: Arle Salomon

Tuesday Feb. 3

MUSIC FROZEN IN TIME

That's how the Supreme Court Building, one of the sites we'll visit in our tour of Jerusalem, has been described. It has been said that the architecture of public buildings should reflect the society in which it is born. We'll see if this is so when we visit the Supreme Court, the Mormon University, the Mt. Scopus campus of the Hebrew University and the new Jerusalem Town Hall complex. NIS 200 including lunch. Tour guide: Avi Ben-Hur

Sunday Feb. 15

JOSEPHUS FLAVIUS IS OUR GUIDE

The battle at Yodfat was terrifying. The Jews didn't stand a chance. They chose to die rather than fall into Roman hands. All except one, their leader Yosef Ben Matityahu, better known as Josephus Flavius. Did he desert his people or did he find another way to serve them - as a historian? We'll visit rediscovered Yodfat, scene of the battle, now a prosperous Galilee moshav, Zippori, the seat of the Sanhedrin in Talmudic times and home of Yehuda Hanassi, codifier of the Mishna, the city whose beautiful mosaics and impressive antiquities are now revealed. NIS 220 including lunch. Tour guide: Israel Ne'eman

The tour price includes transportation from Jerusalem or Tel Aviv and return, entrance to all sites, background lectures and on-the-spot explanations. Lunch as indicated. Pick-up and drop-off along the route when possible and arranged beforehand. Reservations and further information:

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Charity fights at home

If countries sometimes get the government that the ineptitude of voters deserves, rarer still are the ones that get an opposition that deserves to be a government. Kenya may rediscover that this week.

Kenya, once the glory and the hope of post-colonial Africa, is a country in sad decline. It is fractured and uneasy, ruled by a corrupt government and intolerant president, and has only a divided and mealy-mouthed opposition as an alternative. In the darkness, there was one faint glimmer on the political horizon as Kenyans went to vote yesterday. That is Charity Ngilu, the first prominent woman, untainted by old-style politics, to emerge on the Kenyan scene.

Stability was once considered Kenya's main asset. It has become its unattainable wish.

Tribalism and violence are as rampant as the cholera epidemic that has killed hundreds of people, while nurses and medical workers sit on strike, hopelessly demanding a 500 percent pay rise.

Graduate Kenyans outside the corruption and favoritism loops return to live and labor where the uneducated have always lived - in shanty towns that make South Africa's black townships look like Wasp suburbs.

Daniel arap Moi, now 74, and his KANU party have led Kenya on a 20-year downhill run from a civilized and prosperous British colony to yet another African basket case of corruption, decay and poverty.

ly in rural areas. A person's entire life is locked into one's tribal identity.

But is he Luo?

Even sophisticated Nairobi dwellers who dislike the countryside fret over their children's growing up without tribal lore and customs that used to be passed on by village grandparents. A Kikuyu or Luo parent feels no less guilty about his or her children's lack of interest in tradition than an old-fashioned Jewish or Catholic parent. Tribal intermarriage remains rare in towns, unheard of outside them. There is no other explanation therefore for the multiplicity of political parties in Kenya. Tribe first, nation second, and the tribes dominate specific regions.

Also, as in many other politically fragmented states of Africa, declaring oneself to be in "the opposition" is often no more than a ploy to get noticed by the ruler, who hopefully will buy off one's loyalty with a fat job.

It saves the whole tedious business of winning a pointless election in order to join the fat-cat table - the only true aim of most Kenyan politicians.

Not all, of course. In this week's election, two strong and credible challengers have emerged - former vice-president Mwai Kibaki, a talented economist, and Charity Ngilu, a successful businesswoman and member of parliament.

Column One



Thomas O'Dwyer

Woman who might

Ngilu is by far the most interesting - one of the New Africans the disillusioned people hope will eventually break the old mold of corruption and tribal favoritism.

She is a successful restaurateur, self-made far from the centers of corruption and cronyism. She comes from the tiny Akama tribe - a threat to no one - and promised, if elected, to stay in office for only one term.

Despite election rhetoric, the most that opposition candidates can hope for this week is to force Moi into a second round. That would notch up a sense of progress - first they had multi-party elections, then they forced the opponents to unite behind one challenger to a man who has ruled Kenya since 1979 and who is using all the levers of power to fight his campaign.

The two front runners from the first round (in other words, Moi and A.N. Other) must fight a second round if no one wins an outright majority of the poll, plus 25% of votes in five provinces.

It is probably too much to hope that the untainted, impressive and progressive Ngilu could be the one to unseat the old stag leader of "politics as usual" and become Africa's first democratically elected woman president.

That Kenyans are even thinking about it is a start. It's more than a sliver of any hope they have seen recently.

Killing polls

"Yes, but," someone may be saying, "Kenya is still holding a democratic election - flawed maybe, but democratic." It is true that Moi drew back from his dictatorial one-party state of the 1980s, under international pressure and threats of sanctions, and held multi-party elections in 1992. At least the government called them elections - to outside observers they resembled a civil war between Moi's supporters and the rest of Kenya. Hundreds of people were killed and Moi won only 35% of the vote. He is still in power, likely to win yet another term.

In the eyes of cynical Kenyans, Moi may be bad, but he has one great advantage - he is not a member of the opposition. In the 1992 election, three ineffectual and squabbling politicians split the 65% Moi didn't get.

Since this was only the first multi-party run at dislodging Moi, surely the opposition would get its act together for the next race? Not a chance. This time there are about 25 parties fielding 15 candidates. Few Kenyans, much less us foreigners, can even be bothered to find out who most of them are.

It is amazing how many commentators skirt the issue of tribalism, as if it were a taboo matter. Anyone who has visited Kenya knows the inflexible tribalism that rules society, especial-



The honeymoon's over

Is the bloom off the rose for Britain's fair-haired Blair?

By WILLIAM D. MONTALBANO

LONDON — Politics mingled with holiday cheer at a London literary agent's party for her writers. Said the essayist to the novelist: "All my friends and I find we are going off Labor." The novelist replied: "The old saying is that, 'With Labor, it always ends in tears.' I'm afraid it might be true again." Suddenly, meteoric Tony Blair, Europe's favorite politician and Bill Clinton's best British buddy, is losing some of the bedrock supporters and crossover voters who helped him overturn an 18-year Conservative dynasty of Margaret Thatcher and her successors.

A quick-succession series of controversies has cast a cloud over the prime minister for the first time since he stormed to office last spring. With disillusion in the air, the honeymoon is ending for "Call me Tony" Blair.

Tight-money policies, hard-edged social reforms and decisions reaching deep into British life have provoked a backlash from his own party and public dismay from protesters as diverse as farmers, butchers, students, consumers, welfare recipients and genteel country people.

"Radical decisions, particularly in the reform of the welfare state, are bound to upset people," said Vernon Bogdanor, a professor of government at Oxford University. "Blair is forcing his party and the British public to face reality. A lot of people don't want to do that." Nonetheless, the prime minister's popularity, though bruised, is still

manifest. In fact, one of the reasons that Blair's contretemps loom so large is that he has climbed so high.

The 44-year-old Blair is the paramount symbol of a new-look country brimming with self-confidence. When French President Jacques Chirac came to town, for example, Blair eschewed traditional wood-paneled London to offer lunch atop a skyscraper in the city's newly gentrified East End.

Wooing Britain's business establishment, historically at odds with a worker-based party, Blair has built on inherited Conservative free-market economic strengths. He stripped the government of its authority to set interest rates and gave that right to the independent Bank of England. And while there are signs of a coming downturn, Britain has Europe's healthiest economy: Unemployment, at 5.2 percent, is about half what it was five years ago.

Under Blair, Britain has returned Hong Kong, the last jewel of the empire, to China with nary a protest back home. Blair has brokered peace talks in Northern Ireland, and he won polls for the devolution of home rule to Scotland and Wales. More constitutional change is in store: a freedom of information bill, election reform, a mayor for London and overhaul of the House of Lords.

Blair's Britain has banned all handguns and solidified its image as "Cool Britannia" in the arts, movies and pop music. The Spice Girls pop group is an international icon. *The Full Monty* has earned more than any other British film.

Even the unofficial national religion, soccer, is world class again.

But Blair's run is being broken by opposition to his reforms and by criticism of high-handed government behavior.

It all began with Humphrey. In November, the prime minister's office was forced to go to extraordinary lengths to prove that the black-and-white cat that had lived at 10 Downing St. for years was alive and well after it was banished without public notice to less august precincts. Blair's lawyer wife, Cherie, is known to have cat allergies.

The Humphrey saga was followed by a political car wreck. During the spring election campaign, Labor successfully attacked Conservative "sleaze." But last month, the head of Formula One auto racing was discovered to have contributed \$1.6 million to Blair's campaign. That became public after the government, at odds with its European allies, decided to exempt race cars - laden with cigarette ads - from a ban on tobacco advertising.

No wrongdoing is alleged, but the incident proved the first blush of embarrassment for a high-riding prime minister.

In another row, Blair opponents and some newspapers are calling for the head of millionaire Geoffrey Robinson. Blair had named Robinson paymaster general - the No. 4 ranking member of the Finance Ministry - and he is now accused of a lack of candor about his personal finances.

Robinson, who benefits from a low-tax offshore trust fund, came

under fire after announcing new restrictions on IRA-like savings funds favored by the British middle class.

Again, there is no accusation of wrongdoing, but Robinson has lost credibility, according to Conservative Party financial spokesman Peter Lilly.

"If he (Robinson) will not now resign, the prime minister must dismiss him," Lilly said.

Nothing doing, Blair responded. This "New Labor" prime minister won office by eschewing the classic socialist principles of a combative and spendthrift party. Now he is discovering that his vote-winning theory is perilous policy in the view of old-line Laborites brought up to believe that government must vigorously redress social imbalances on behalf of the disadvantaged.

Case in point: Blair's government has infuriated British students by announcing that it will abolish a keystone of the welfare state, free university tuition. As a result, university applications have slumped. Students march, but the government is unbowed.

Reform of the 50-year-old welfare state will continue. The government will stick to its strategy of getting the unemployed off benefits and back to work. Chancellor Gordon Brown said after another controversial Blair initiative was announced earlier this month.

This time, Labor's left wing rebelled against the initiative, a cut in benefits for single parents devised as a means of getting them back to work. In a major breach of

party discipline, many Labor members of Parliament deserted him to vote against the measure. A junior minister and four unpaid ministerial assistants quit.

"This is about demonstrating to the poor that we can be as brutal to the poor as the government we replaced," Labor MP Ken Livingstone said. "They [the poor] feel betrayed by this government, and I feel ashamed of what we are doing." Blair defended his plan, saying: "Instead of paying out more benefits, I want to reduce unemployment and reduce the cost of failure." Despite bad blood, the \$100 million cuts were passed. In their wake, Blair's ministers will not quite deny persistent reports that a cut in benefits to the disabled is also being studied. Reform of the National Health Service, through which 87 percent of Britons receive free health care, is next.

"I don't want just to save the NHS, I want to give it a new lease on life," Blair said of a system that has now 1.2 million patients on the waiting list for non-urgent treatments.

Beyond the reforms, Blair's judgment is also being called into question for the first time.

Critics say that banning the sale of all beef on the bone this month was an immoderate response to the remote possibility - 1 in 600 million by one estimate - that it could cause the fatal human equivalent of "mad cow" disease. The new beef crisis and an imminent ban on fox hunting have cost Blair support in the countryside. (Los Angeles Times)

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Taiwan watches bitterly as Mandela embraces China

By JEFFREY PARKER

TAIPEI (Reuters) - In the final days before South Africa switches official China ties from Taipei to Beijing, Taiwan views the diplomatic snub with bitterness and a sense of irony.

Come January 1, Nelson Mandela's hard-won democracy will embrace a totalitarian China that still imprisons critics who challenge untested power - like Mandela in an earlier era.

"From our point of view, we feel betrayed by South Africa," said Ger Yeong-kuang, director of a constitutional affairs institute at National Taiwan University.

"The people and government here felt Mandela would keep his word and preserve ties and feel regret that he didn't."

Commentators have noted that while Taiwan and South Africa have junked authoritarianism and taken common strides towards democracy, China's Communist Party still uses repression to bolster its authoritarian monopoly on power.

"We feel so helpless and frustrated, even though we feel we are on the right side of the global democratic trend with so many other countries," Ger said.

During South Africa's decades as a global diplomatic pariah, Taiwan stood by the racist apartheid government while Beijing backed the banned Communist Party and, indirectly, Mandela's anti-apartheid African National Congress.

But after Taiwan's 1987 lifting of martial law launched its own democratic reforms, Taipei strongly backed Mandela's party in South Africa's transition years

leading to the 1994 vote that brought him to power.

The gesture won Mandela's sympathy and, in the first years under his multiracial rule, Pretoria strove to keep ties with Taipei - seen as a generous source of investment and aid.

But South Africa also built new bridges with Beijing, making formal ties with Taipei increasingly untenable.

The *Independence Morning Post* yesterday recalled bitterly how Mandela, before announcing the switchover in November 1996, had hailed Taiwan's contribution and his oft-made mark that it would be "immoral" to cancel diplomatic ties.

But in the end, Mandela gave in to Beijing's unrelenting pressure and South Africa's desire to protect its surging links with China's huge and fast-growing economy.

In view of China's rising global influence and its surging trade ties with South Africa, analysts say the only surprise is that Pretoria didn't act sooner.

"It's unfair as far as Taiwan is concerned, but Taiwan has to live with this kind of setback," said Taipei strategic analyst Andrew Yang.

"With communist China's power and influence increasing in the international community, any country that wants to maintain contacts with Taiwan has to consider whether its own interests will be jeopardized and compromised."

The irony will deepen when Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, who arrived in Cape Town on Sunday for the switch, visits Robben Island - the former penal colony where Mandela and

other political prisoners languished for decades.

Mandela has won credit in Taiwan for trying to keep the island's exiled Republic of China in the picture.

The sometimes blunt-speaking ex-political prisoner irritated China by entering what Beijing considers a political taboo - a call for simultaneous formal ties with "both Chinas."

As expected, Beijing insisted Pretoria recognize only its People's Republic of China as the sole legitimate China, a model accepted by all but 30 of the world's states.

Beijing has used its growing global clout to squeeze those states that still recognize Taiwan, hindering UN peacekeeping plans for Guatemala and Haiti and leading a UN boycott of a world forum on the Panama Canal held in Panama.

China's diplomatic embargo aims eventually to force what it sees as a rebel-held province back under mainland sovereignty.

South Africa-China direct trade is on track to hit \$1.6 billion in 1997, making China South Africa's sixth biggest trading partner - not even counting \$1.4 billion in trade with Hong Kong, 70 percent of which goes ultimately to China.

Trade with Taiwan remains significant at \$1.8 billion.

Though humiliating to an increasingly isolated Taiwan, South Africa's snub pales in significance beside earlier switchovers by far bigger friends of Taiwan.

While Washington's 1979 switch was anticipated, capping an eight-year transition, it still stings. Taiwan in effect was a US protec-



Chinese Vice President and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen is greeted with Chinese flags upon his arrival at the airport in Cape Town this week. (AP)

torate after the Chinese Nationalist republic, driven from the mainland in 1949, took refuge on the island.

Taipei has yet to get over what it regards as a betrayal by South Korea, which gave no trace of notice before pulling out of

Taiwan to open a Beijing embassy in 1992.

Taipei mistakenly assumed Seoul could never recognize the

"close-as-lips-and-teeth" ideological ally of its own bitter adversary, North Korea, despite their growing trade ties.

Unusually low number of disasters occurred in 1997

By ANDREW MARSHALL

FRANKFURT (Reuters) - The world suffered an unusually low number of natural disasters in 1997 but faces a sharply rising risk in the future of global warming and weather disruptions, the largest reinsurer said yesterday.

The good news in Munich Re's annual review of global disasters was that 1997 saw only 530 "large loss events," well below the usual tally of 580 to 600.

The bad news was that the long-term trend in catastrophes remains on the dramatic increase and disasters will become more frequent and more costly.

Global warming, attributed to

increased greenhouse gas emissions, and weather disturbances will pose an ever greater threat, according to Munich Re.

Most of the damage in 1997 was done by windstorms and floods. It was a relatively quiet year for earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, forest fires, droughts, landslides and avalanches.

Munich Re said economic losses from such disasters came to \$30 billion in 1997, half the previous year's total. But the human toll was more severe - about 13,000 people killed, compared to 12,000 in 1996.

The international insurance industry paid out around \$4.5 billion as a result of natural disasters, compared with about

\$9.0 billion the previous year.

Windstorms were the most common disaster - Munich Re counted 170. Floods came second at 120 and the number of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions was put at 100.

"The fact that extreme atmospheric events accounted for such a large proportion of the losses is further evidence for us of the expected change in the environment and climate in many regions of the world," said meteorologist Gerhard Berz, who heads Munich Re's geoscience research group.

"New extreme values for various atmospheric parameters, like precipitation and wind velocity, will often have

catastrophic effects," he said in a statement.

Munich Re said 1997's most notable disaster was the flooding which hit central Europe during the summer. Economic losses came to around \$5.3 billion, with Poland and the Czech Republic bearing the brunt of the damage.

Another focus of the year was the El Nino weather phenomenon, blamed for fueling forest fires in Indonesia and Australia, flooding in South America and Somalia and a number of hurricanes in Mexico.

"The recurrent and long familiar El Nino...seems to be turning into the

"scapegoat of the year" although, to be fair, it could also have received credit for the extremely low hurricane activity in the North Atlantic and the Caribbean," the company said.

Other big disasters included "mighty earth tremors" in Italy, a number of earthquakes in Iran which claimed 2,300 lives, and two Far East typhoons that caused windstorms and flood losses from Thailand to Japan.

Munich Re said urgent action was needed to limit man-made changes to the environment.

But it warned that "even radical environmental protection measures cannot prevent the occurrence of ever more and

ever costlier catastrophes worldwide."

The increasing concentration of people and property in major cities and the greater susceptibility of modern industrial societies to disruptions in infrastructure would ensure that a "dramatic increase" in the long-term trend of disasters would continue.

"Comparing the figures for the 1960s and the last 10 years, Munich Re has established that the number of major natural catastrophes was three times larger and cost the world's economies, after adjusting for inflation, eight times and the insurance industry: 14 times as much," the company said. "A change in this development is not in sight."

Kenya's elections characterized by confusion and delays

NAIROBI (AP) - Yielding to voters frustrated by delays and confusion, election officials agreed yesterday to a second day of polling in Kenya's second multiparty election in 31 years.

Police said two people were killed yesterday in a political clash in western Siaya district, 300 km northwest of Nairobi. Spokesman Peter Kimanthi could not confirm which parties were involved.

The Electoral Commission reported problems at many of the country's 12,700 polling stations. Some ballots were delivered late or to the wrong locations and others never arrived.

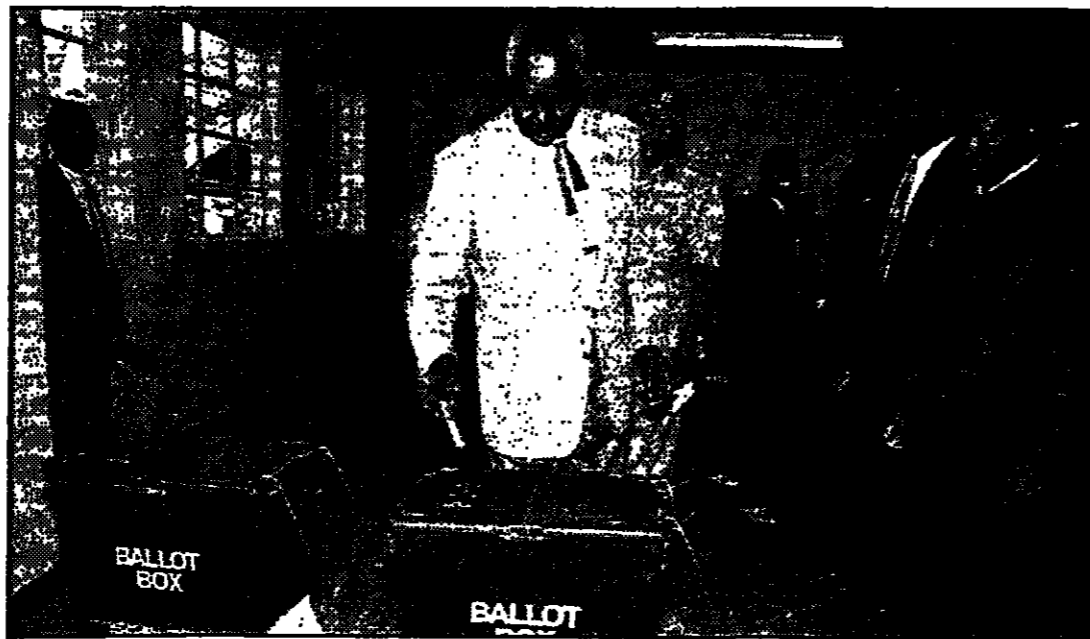
Citing severe weather problems in many parts of Kenya and delays caused by logistical problems, the commission said voting would be extended for another 12 hours, from dawn to dusk today.

"Meanwhile, there will be no counting of votes anywhere in the country until further notice from the commission," Chairman Samuel Kivuitu said in a statement.

Although he ordered all stations closed as scheduled at 6 p.m. (1500 GMT), word spread slowly and many remained open. In Gachie, a northeastern suburb of Nairobi, a line of voters 100 meters long continued to file into a high school at sunset.

President Daniel arap Moi was counting on voters' fear of the violence that has swept through neighboring African countries to win a fifth, five-year term.

The 73-year-old leader urged Kenya's 9 million voters to go to the polls "with sober reflection that will ensure continued peace and



Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi, seeking a fifth and final term after 19 years in power, casts his ballot yesterday in Sacho village, his birthplace, 320 km. northwest of Nairobi. (AP)

stability for our country." Although Moi is expected to win, he may face a runoff against one of a dozen contenders.

One top contender, Charity Ngilu, charged Moi's ruling Kenyan African National Union party with vote rigging and said she would challenge the results if Moi won.

Ngilu and her backers stormed electoral offices in central Kiuh district, 120 km. east of Nairobi, and took about 1,000 voter cards that she alleged were bought by KANU. Local officials denied wrongdoing.

Moi's contenders have blamed him for the corruption that has cost Kenya international loans and ruined roads, schools and hospitals.

Flooding canceled voting in three precincts in northeastern Kenya. KTN-TV reported, forcing residents to paddle boats to nearby polling stations. A two-hour downpour drenched voters in the southern city of Mombasa, but nearly everyone remained in line.

Long lines formed outside voting stations before the scheduled opening at 6 a.m. (0300 GMT). Scores of election observers watched the confusion. Armed

police were posted outside voting stations, a sign of the violence that has marred the campaign. On Sunday, three people were killed in election-related violence in southwest Kenya, police said. About 50 people were killed in the Trans Mara area, 200 km. west of Nairobi, in the weeks before the ballot.

In the 1992 general elections - the first under a multiparty system in 26 years - Moi won more than 25 percent of the vote in five provinces and 36% nationwide. But monitors said the elections were badly flawed.

Official: No neo-Nazi crisis in German army

BONN (AP) - Fighting for the reputation of the army, Germany's Defense Ministry yesterday dismissed as "absurd" opposition charges that neo-Nazi incidents have thrown the military into crisis.

Walter Kolbow, defense spokesman for the opposition Social Democratic Party, accused Defense Minister Volker Rucht of sending soldiers abroad on high-profile peacekeeping missions but neglecting to give them political guidance at home.

He also criticized the government as having demoralized recruits by refusing to raise their daily allowance and skimping on equipment while approving the costly purchase of the Eurofighter combat jet.

"The Bundeswehr is in crisis," Kolbow declared in a year-end review of the state of the military.

Rucht has said that incidents of neo-Nazi behavior were isolated cases, and not indicative of a widespread problem in the ranks. Kolbow called that theory a "caricature, given the series of all too many new incidents with rightist extremist background."

The Defense Ministry accused Kolbow of spreading an "unfounded pessimistic image about the state of the armed forces."

"No one is tougher and more resolute in combating rightist radical incidents" than Rucht, a ministry statement said.

Pushed by opposition politicians, the parlia-

ment is to open a probe into rightist extremism in the military next month.

In two of the most embarrassing incidents, members of a mountain infantry battalion based in eastern Germany were suspended this year after home videos showed soldiers giving the Nazi salute and acting out rapes and murders.

The videos, which surfaced in July and October, also showed soldiers talking about killing Jews.

There have been a string of other reports on neo-Nazi incidents in the armed forces in recent months. One of them forced the military to admit that convicted neo-Nazi terrorist Manfred Roeder was an invited lecturer at an officers academy in Hamburg in 1995.

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China: A well-oiled strategist

An increasingly assertive China competes for Central-Asian oil fields

By DAVID B. OTTAWAY and DAN MORGAN

US oil companies got an unpleasant surprise on September 24 when the government of Kazakhstan unexpectedly sold a controlling interest in its second-largest oil field to a new player in the international energy game: the Chinese National Petroleum Co.

Aggressive bidding by Beijing's state oil company on the \$4.4 billion deal was reinforced by repeated phone calls to Kazakhstan's president from Chinese Premier Li Peng, who more than matched extensive lobbying efforts led by Vice-President Gore on behalf of US bidders.

The Chinese leader's personal involvement, the use of government funds to sweeten the bidding, and the offer to build two multibillion-dollar pipelines as part of the deal signaled a new determination by Beijing to pursue its economic interests abroad — even when that means paying top dollar and risking political fallout in other capitals, according to US officials and international trade experts.

China's booming economy and rapid industrialization mean, "pure and simple, they need oil," said Ming Wan, a China-born international affairs specialist at George Mason University.

Kazakhstan is a new kind of post-Cold War battleground on which three old military rivals

— China, Russia and the United States — vie for markets and access to resources. But the larger issue for US officials is whether China's vigorous approach to securing energy supplies over the last 18 months — in Iraq, Iran, Sudan and Venezuela, as well as Kazakhstan — indicates a new Chinese mercantilism that will butt up against American commercial interests.

US officials publicly have welcomed China's involvement in the oil-rich Caspian Sea region of Central Asia, noting that Chinese investments will help diversify the world's oil market and lessen dependence on the volatile Middle East. "The Chinese need to have access to the vast energy supplies in the Caspian region," Energy Secretary Federico Pena said during a recent international conference in Washington.

Yet China's tactics could pose future problems for American companies, according to Jeffrey E. Garten, undersecretary of commerce for international trade from 1993 to 1995. Chinese officials, Garten said, told him they will do what is necessary to make their auto, petrochemical and other key industries competitive in world markets.

"They want the world to make room for them at the top. They don't want to wait," said Garten, now dean of the Yale University School of Management. "In [Chinese] minds, their strategic

advantage is that they can out-subsidize us. Their prices are going to be lower." Top Chinese officials have made no bones about their intentions.

"We are going to take advantage of our strength to participate in global oil and gas exploration," Zhou Yongkang, president of the Chinese oil company, told a Houston conference earlier this year.

In the Kazakh oil competition, a Chinese promise to build pipelines not only to China but also to Iran added a provision that private US oil companies could not match. "This adds a new level to the game," said Sheila Heslin, a former National Security Council economic specialist.

Whether China's foray into Kazakhstan, a country long part of the Soviet Union and still regarded possessively by Russia, foreshadows contentious commercial conflict or benign economic globalization is uncertain. But Beijing has displayed an increasing willingness to use the Chinese National Petroleum Co. to challenge US and European oil giants around the world.

Since becoming a net importer of oil and refined products in 1993, China has tried to tap new sources of oil and gas in several countries that the US has sought to isolate economically. These include Iran, Iraq and Sudan, all of which are on a US blacklist of countries alleged to support terrorism or to be building weapons



Chinese PM Li Peng: Efficient lobbying in Kazakhstan. (AP)

of mass destruction.

As part of the proposal that enabled China to beat out such American companies as Amoco, Unocal, Texaco and Exxon for oil and gas fields in Kazakhstan, Beijing promised not only a \$3.5 billion, 1,800-mile oil pipeline to China but also a pipeline to refineries in northern Iran. While

providing a southern export outlet for the former Soviet republic, that route would collide with US policy aimed at preventing the construction of new pipelines from the Caspian Sea to or through Iran.

Chinese oil officials also have agreed to form a joint venture with the National Iranian Oil Co. to explore offshore in Iran, China and other countries and to upgrade Chinese refineries for purposes of processing more Iranian oil.

In June, China signed a \$1.2 billion agreement with Iraq to develop its Ahdab field once UN sanctions against Baghdad are lifted. And last year China replaced the US firm Occidental Petroleum Corp. in a \$1 billion oil and pipeline deal in Sudan after Congress barred US companies from dealing with countries accused of supporting terrorism.

China's developing commercial ties with Iran and Iraq put it on a potential collision course with Washington. In the UN Security Council, China has supported an early end to US-backed sanctions against Iraq. And Beijing has clashed with the Clinton administration over Beijing's sale of anti-ship missiles to Iran. "Depending on Iran is no way to meet China's need for reliable energy supplies," said Commerce Department counselor Jan H. Kalicki, an administration spokesman on Caspian oil issues.

But American experts say Washington should understand China's motives. These include "the corporate ambitions of China's national oil company and the national security concerns of China's political and military leadership," Daniel Yergin, president of Cambridge Energy Research Associates, wrote recently.

China's domestic oil production peaked at about 3 million barrels a day several years ago — about one-sixth of daily use in the US. Hopes for finding a substantial oil patch in China's vast Western deserts have failed to be realized. As a result, the country's oil import needs are certain to grow steadily in the years ahead.

But depending on established international oil companies would undercut what some experts describe as the Chinese leadership's deep-rooted instinct for self-reliance, nurtured during decades of isolation.

The state oil company has invested in or conducted exploration in 23 countries. It bid more than \$350 million to win rights to restore two marginal fields in Venezuela — outbidding American firms by \$100 million. It also formed a joint venture with the Italian oil company Agip and won "a production cooperation" arrangement in Kuwait.

Meanwhile, its offshore drilling arm has moved into joint exploration in Southeast Asia.

The latest commercial triumph, Kazakhstan, will be one of China's main oil sources and supply 200,000 barrels a day by the year 2000, according to official announcements. On October 21, the first trainload of oil from China's Kazakh holdings headed toward Chinese refineries across what until recently had been one of the most tightly shut borders in the world.

The oil was the first payoff from China's newly won concessions at Uzen and Aktyubinsk in western Kazakhstan, both of which had been coveted by major US oil companies.

In the case of the Uzen field, bids by Amoco and Unocal were supported by phone calls to top Kazakh officials from Gore and Commerce Secretary William Daley. Although Amoco officials said their company was the front-runner, China ended up winning a 51 percent share, with the Kazakh state oil company keeping the balance.

Beijing's interest in Central Asia's oil and gas riches has injected a new factor into the rush by international oil and gas companies for what is widely regarded as the largest untapped energy reservoir outside the Middle East.

"This is a strategic move on China's part," said S. Frederick Starr, director of the Central Asia Institute in Washington. "It symbolizes that Central Asia is China's new backyard." (The Washington Post)

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Local yuppies, foreign sleaze

Theater Roundup



By Naomi Dougal

A promising crop of exciting shoe-string productions continues to mushroom on the fringe and in the various little theaters this season. Ramat Gan's Hasifriya, one of the more elegant of the latter, is a good example. If not outright avant garde it has, with young British director David Bridle's novel interpretation and Jonathan Gefen's faithful rendering of the original rhymed couplets into a witty, colloquial Hebrew, turned *Le Misantrope* into a contemporary classic. Set in a posh modern Tel Aviv apartment instead of an ornate 17th-century Parisian salon, performed by a

LE MISANTROPE
By Moliere
Hasifriya Theater
Ramat Gan

cast that caricatures local yuppies rather than Louis XIV aristocrats, the play gains actuality as a caustic critique of the pretensions and peccadilloes of the snobbish upper crust of present-day local society.

Alceste, the implacable protagonist of the play, is a passionate crusader for veracity and straight talking in a milieu where blatant insincerity, deviousness and hypocrisy prevail. By his uncompromising honesty, he stirs up a series of storms that wreck the composed calm and sophisticated surface of the social life of his friends and familiars, and ultimately his own peace of mind.

The role of the soured, misanthropic, pontificating zealot is played by Amir Kriaf with much subtlety, though marred at times by outbursts of exaggerated rage. Unwieldy raving and ranting is an overall glaring defect of this otherwise relatively sophisticated production.

Avital Pasternak's *Colimene*,



Hardly edifying: Pearce Quigley (left), Lloyd Hutchinson and Caroline Catz star in 'Shopping and F***ing.'

however, confronts her irate lover with just the right blend of sophistication and manipulation, while Michal Weinberg as Arsinoe, the woman with the baracuda smile, delivers a delightful grotesque. Shai Rosen as Oronte, the poet manque, is naively charming, in contrast to the affected decadence comically caricatured by *Colimene's* other two admirers.

A minor but no less praiseworthy virtue of this production is the clear, compelling diction with which every actor in this young cast endows each speech. Let's hope that this is not a passing phenomenon but a process that is here to stay.

CONCEIVED at the Royal National Theatre Studio, 'Shopping and F***ing,' a contribution from the British fringe to our own local stirrings in that heretofore neglected genre, was hardly edifying.

A well-staged, competently performed production, its claim to fame rests on a premise which is hardly viable here. Vaunted by critics as "a contemporary classic," it allegedly reflects the torments and tribulations of the youth of the '90s.

This may be true for the brutalization that has beset certain elements of urban British society. But the decibel-deafening foreground, the sleazy sex, scatological humor,

the petty crime, drug and other addictions that add up to the title, if present in Israeli society, are thus far not so prevalent as to ring an echo of recognition with most spectators here.

SHOPPING AND F***ING
By Mark Ravenhill
ZOA House
Tel Aviv

The homosexual scene is what largely dominates the script. Yet neither is that in any way in sync with the genuine sufferings of the social outcasts that it purports to portray. Whereas the brilliant DV8 Dance Company elevated the more tragic, if sordid, side of that

segment of society to finely achieved artistic expression, *Shopping and...* reduces it to a cesspool of squalid, unsavory comedy.

That it does so with undisguised, uninhibited disregard for the stuffy reactions of the straitlaced is undeniable. Whether in doing so it stimulates empathy, understanding, or compassion is more questionable.

As social critique or contemporary satire, it does not grasp either. Audiences here will have to wait till our own Hanoch Levine takes the subject in hand in order to feel the savage bite and depth of degradation that *Shopping and F***ing* relegates to the realms of cloacal humor.

How the bottom fell out of the music

In Tune



By David Britton

This was not a year to sing home about. The biggest song was a rewrite of a 20-year-old homage to Marilyn Monroe, and the biggest pop act resembled a soft-porn show.

Whether you take the Keith Richards route that Elton John "can only write songs about dead blondes" or Sting's view that "Candle in the Wind" was "the right song at the right time," 1997 will always be connected to John's heartfelt tribute to Princess Diana, just like 1985 will be remembered for "We Are the World."

It was a year in which the record-company suits buried grunge and invented electronica, an attempt to mix rock and trance as exemplified by The Prodigy and The Chemical Brothers, in a desperate effort to stop the bottoming out of the music business. The contrived bid failed as sales plummeted for a second year running.

The Spice Girls proved that, instead of one-bit wonders, they are actually two-bit wonders and counting. But their primary talents were still in visual category as their outfits got skimpier and their behavior more coquettish.

The under-drinking-age Hanson joined the ranks of child and teen

phenoms with its bouncy, irresistible pop that Michael Jackson perfected some 30 years ago and then forgot about.

U2 was nearly upstaged by a giant lemon. Billy Joel went cold turkey on rock 'n' roll in favor of the classics, and Paul Simon got down and dirty on Broadway.

The year saw some of rock's venerable favorites dust off the mothballs and make some their most compelling music in years. And as always, there were a handful of discs by young and old alike that, in a year without much inspiration, still provided some reason to believe.

DISCS THAT WILL ENDURE
Urban Hymns - The Verve, for its headstrong idealistic fervor, and a great anthem, "Bittersweet Symphony." A "Joshua Tree" for the 1990s.

OK Computer - Radiohead, for its shameless ambitiousness, which sometimes succumbs to prog-rock pretensions but just as often comes up triple jackpot in a musical world of diminishing returns.

The Colour and the Shape - Foo Fighters, for its big beat and melancholy tunesmith. Dave Grohl sheds the ghosts of Nirvana and roars like a rock natural.

The Healing Game - Van Morrison, for the soulful music and the sound of his voice, which still sounds like he means it. An old master still at the height of his gospel r&b powers.

Bringing Down the Horse - The Wallflowers, for putting all those '60s-sounding '90s rockers in their place. Great songs, ragged harmonies a la The Band, Springsteen's street characters and a good dose of Dad's mystery.



American band Hanson joined the ranks of big-name child and teen acts with its bouncy, irresistible pop.

Time on my Mind - Bob Dylan, for his courage to face the abyss without belief. I stand by my claims it doesn't rank with his best, but he sounds so emotionally lost, and so passionate about it, that the unimaginative accompaniment barely matters. For the first time, he really sounds like a rolling stone, with no direction home.

Middle of Nowhere - Hanson, for its unabashed, exuberant pop, the likes of which is not made any-

more. Too young to be jaded, to normal to be cool, too catchy to resist.

Blur - Blur, for its low-fi answer to Oasis. The Britpop guitar slingers take a hint from American independents like Pavement and simplify things. It remembers to include what it learned from The Kinks and Mott the Hoople, though.

Best Single: "Bitch" by Meredith Brooks. She may become a musical footnote by next year but for three minutes in '97

she was a star.

BEST COMPILATIONS

Lounge-a-Palooza - lounge music gets in bed with rock to conceive music fit for a John Waters movie.

The Songs of Jimmie Rodgers - Dylan, Mellencamp, et al. pay tribute to one of the flowing sources

Best Boxed Set: *Old Friends* - Simon & Garfunkel - great picture, a thoughtful essay, and oh yeah, some nice music.

Best R&B: *Baduizm* - Erykah Badu - slinky jazz/blues so authentic you can hear the glasses tinkle and smell the cigar smoke.

Best Movie Sound Track: *That Thing You Do!* - the Wonders never cease to capture the spirit of the British invasion.

Hip songwriter: Burt Bacharach - movie soundtracks would die without him. Elvis Costello begged to write with him and a tribute album covered him. And he didn't have to crawl to MTV the way Tony Bennett did. What the world needs now is Burt and more Burt.

STILL TICKING

The Rolling Stones - too spotty to join the "best of" list; *Bridge To Babylon* shows the Stones gracefully acting their age.

John Fogerty - returns from the swamp with groove intact. Spinal Tap - with a touch of lemon.

U2 - continued to put on the world, confusing farce and reality until it didn't matter which was which. But cut out the techno, guys: Pump down the volume.

Oasis - overshot its mark with *Be Here Now*.

The Gallagher Brothers - need to be reminded that sometimes, less is more.

The angst of young composers

CONCERT ROUNDUP

Nothing can be more exciting than encountering new voices in the arts. But at this concert of new composers, we encountered a group of young, angry, composers more concerned with conveying their angst than with making real music. Lior Navok's *Bestiarum* featured a large battery of percussion and created an antagonistic aura. Karen Rosenbaum's

YOUNG COMPOSERS' CONCERT
The Jerusalem Music Center
December 26

Mechanism also struggled. The combination of a violin with wind and brass instruments created an alienating atmosphere.

Nurit Jugend's *Winter Dreams*, a short and somewhat evocative work for string quartet and soprano, was the closest one got to a real lyric melody in this concert, but it was too short for anyone to grasp the composer's style or ideas.

All three works were superbly performed, however, by young musicians of the Jerusalem Music Center, who delivered a performance that seemed much more dedicated and loving than the message the three composers were trying to convey - a message of raw anger with the world at large and with their own creative process.

Whoever organized this concert must be criticized for including a long section by Ronen Shapira at its conclusion. After those serious attempts at music-making, whether one liked them or not, came a totally self-absorbed composer/pianist who was interested only in himself, presenting a musical menagerie of styles that had very little to do with the framework of the concert. His work was not worthy of the space it was performed in.

Michael Aizenstadt

THE International Symphony Orchestra has a very good group of string players and superb brass and wind sections, scores of young and enthusias-

International Symphony Orchestra plays Dvorak and Bruckner
YMCA Hall, Jerusalem
December 26

tic musicians who played their hearts out in Bruckner's fourth symphony, but to no avail. Conductor Jacek Kasprzyk was unable to lead them in the right direction, and the result was a loud rendering of a great work, which no one seemed to understand how to play.

The performance of Dvorak's eighth symphony was much more tender and showcased the orchestra in a much better light.

Michael Aizenstadt

A UNIQUE opportunity for experiencing 13th-century music of Spain was offered by the Hesperion Ensemble, directed by Jordi Savall, in the

Authentica series. This so-called "early" music - usually not earlier than the Renaissance - surprised the audience by its freshness and vitality. The performance did

HESPERION XX ENSEMBLE

Medieval Spanish Music
Authentica series
Jerusalem Theater, December 20

not get bogged down with period instruments and techniques. Rather, it brought to throbbing life the mood and vivacity of those times. The use of Middle Eastern instruments, such as the oud (Yair Dalal), rebab, and Arab-style percussion (Pedro Esteven) - at that time, a part of daily Spanish life - contributed a touch of verisimilitude.

In the instrumental repertory, *joie de vivre* at its most infectious was conveyed by the rebab and percussion duo in the dazzlingly virtuosic *In Pro*, and by the flute (Pedro Memelsdorff) and percussion in the equally sparkling *Saltarello*. Grief was expressed movingly in *Tristan's Lament*.

The group's vocal phenomenon was soprano Monserrat Figueras, whose pure, bright and intense voice was electrifying, in King Alfonso X's *Spirital Chants to the Virgin*, and in the Sephardi romances alike.

Ury Eppstein

TWO Handel oratorio selections, one Jewish and one Christian - *Judas Maccabaeus* and *Messiah* - and one Israeli work, Ben-Haim's *Between Myrtle Blossoms*, based on biblical texts (performed by Shirley Hecht and Ruth Halbanayi), con-

LITURGICAL OPENING CONCERT

Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra
Jerusalem Theater
December 23

tributed the appropriate measure of festivity and religious balance to the JSO's Liturgical opening concert.

With Nicholas McGegan as conductor, a lively, energetic, thoroughly polished performance of Handel oratorios was assured. His tempi were brisk yet never rushed or breathless. He knew exactly what he wanted and knew how to get it from the orchestra and the choir. His way of holding the pause before the conclusion of *Messiah's* "Hallelujah Chorus" could serve as a model for letting tension mount in absolute silence.

There was something endearing about Julia Gooding's clear, crystalline, innocent-sounding soprano. Clair Bradshaw's mezzo-soprano was warm and mellow, musically correct rather than exciting. Jorma Silvasti displayed a glorious heroic tenor, metallic in timbre yet lyrical when required. Ralf Lukas's bass-baritone was pleasant and admirably flexible in his coloratura.

The Vilnius Jauna Muzika Chorus was a pure joy. Their voices sounded remarkably pleasing, well-balanced and clear, achieving a high degree of subtlety as well as power.

Ury Eppstein

OPERA REVIEW

By Ury Eppstein

Far from being a mere chance combination, The New Israeli Opera's choice of a double-bill of works by two German-Jewish 20th-century composers, Kurt Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins* and Viktor Ullmann's *The Kaiser of Atlantis*, was a significant reflection of the most terrible period in our history.

Sins, written in 1933, Weill and librettist Bertolt Brecht

scathingly satirize the corruption of European society.

The real heroes of this production were Sabine Hartmannshenn's direction and Bettina Neuhaus's sets.

The sets were ingenious in their combination of stark simplicity and sophisticated suggestiveness. Frank Evin's razor-sharp lighting effects were singularly spectacular.

Soprano Anja Silja as Anna I, in *Sins*, came close to Lotte Lenya's German-cabaret style of the Twenties, but occasional gaps between her attempts and the original model sometimes caused dis-

appointments. Sally Anne Friedland's dancing, as Anna II, was pleasant.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS
By Kurt Weill

THE KAISER OF ATLANTIS
By Viktor Ullmann

New Israeli Opera
Tel Aviv Performing Arts Center
December 22

Baritone Joachim Seipp, in *Atlantis*, written in 1944, was

appropriately obnoxious as the Kaiser.

Bass Michael Pavlu was an altogether dignified, almost likable, Death. Tenor Bengi Ola Morgny, as Harlekin, managed to combine this character's classic comicality with the bitterness of modern satire.

Jeanine Thames's soprano, as Bubikopf, was a credible personification of the love theme in this sombre environment.

Under Mendi Rodan's baton, the Symphony Orchestra Rishon LeZion's rendition was polished, energy-charged and faithful to the works' spirit.

A quartet of Baroque

A series of four Baroque music concerts opened earlier this month in Tel Aviv's Enav Center in Tel Aviv and Haifa's House of Grace Church. The series features local and international Baroque musicians in programs focusing on the music of Baroque and early music composers. This weekend's concert (Friday 9:30 in Haifa, Saturday 6 in Tel Aviv) showcases a mixture of sacred music and theater performed by Le Concert De Lalonde from France, headed by soprano Isabelle Desrochers.

Michael Aizenstadt

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Between opposition and hatred

An essay by journalist Ari Shavit in *Ha'arets* last week, labeling 1997 as "The Year of Hatred" of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, has created quite a journalistic stir.

Within days, half a dozen prominent columnists have attacked the essay, in which Shavit argues that Netanyahu has been demonized by left-leaning elites beyond all justifiable proportions.

Shavit claims that the Left's hatred can be explained by its precipitous fall from the giddy, near deification, of Yitzhak Rabin following his embrace of the peace process. To Rabin's murder, to Peres's unexpected defeat. The identification of Netanyahu with the destruction of the Left's "messianic age" was brilliantly captured, according to Shavit, in biting posters depicting Yitzhak Rabin by the words "We Won't Forget" and Netanyahu over the words "We Won't Forgive."

In the process of demonizing Netanyahu, Shavit argues, the Left has run into a contradiction between its dual roles as custodian of democracy and of the peace process, since the election of Netanyahu last year amounted to a rejection of the Rabin/Peres approach to the Oslo process.

Shavit's critics reply, variously, that Netanyahu is not facing more than vigorous and fair criticism, and that if anything it is the Right that is acting anti-democratically by subverting the will of the voters.

These critics also accuse Shavit of naively buying Netanyahu's own explanation of his predicament: essentially a bad case of sour grapes over losing the election.

In truth, there is no hiding from the underlying hatred of Netanyahu has developed among certain portions of the Left, including within the nation's elites. It is fair for Shavit to ask what exactly had led to this lynch atmosphere, why the Israeli press's editorial pages often "read like an endless string of summary verdicts," or why their feature pages "seem like a series of firing squads all aimed in one direction."

Shavit is right in pointing out the difficulty with explaining the intensity of the opposition to Netanyahu solely on the basis of his policies, his style of governance, or even the obvious mistakes he has made. This demonization is all the more ironic and disturbing in the context of the Rabin assassination, a tragedy whose lesson was supposed to be that not only can incitement breed violence, but that the tone of Israel's political discourse must be moderated.

Though Netanyahu's penchant for trying to please opposing sides has confused matters,

much of the Left has been unwilling to grant even the possibility that Netanyahu is committed to achieving peace with the Palestinians. Rather than limit itself to the ample ground for criticizing individual decisions, the hard-core Left has maintained—since before Netanyahu's election—that his entire policy is built on deception, and amounts to a deliberate attempt to destroy the Oslo process.

There is a world of difference between debating the means to achieve peace, and saying the government does not want peace at all. The latter, in effect, denies the legitimacy of the government and leads inexorably to blind hatred. The former, while it might lead to a conclusion that the government must go, still leaves a fair basis for civilized democratic debate.

As paranoid as Netanyahu is accused of being, it takes at least as much paranoia to believe that a government that is trying to rush headlong into final-status talks is not interested in peace.

Oslo, after all, was never supposed to be an end in itself, but the means to arriving at a final-status agreement. The government's insistence on exercising Israel's rights under Oslo (by building within Jerusalem, for example) or demanding more Palestinian compliance, may be blasted as foolhardy by the Left, but cannot be considered an illegitimate approach to the peace process.

There is plenty of room for legitimate criticism of Netanyahu's judgment, tactics, decision-making process, and even basic trustworthiness. Shavit himself reports that Netanyahu is "incapable of genuine human contact" and that "he still has not proven whether he has the human and moral presence of the great statesmen of this century that he so admires, ... without which it is impossible to lead Israel at such a fateful time."

Shavit also writes that "Two years after Rabin's assassination, Netanyahu still has made absolutely no moves toward bringing about the new harmony that Israel needs so badly. He has not closed a single breach or healed any wounds."

But by refusing to concede any legitimacy to the government position, the Left has compromised its ability to level such otherwise legitimate criticisms. As a by-product, the constant drumbeat of skepticism towards the government's commitment to peace has helped harden Palestinian positions (thereby contributing to the stalling of the peace process) and helped weaken Israel's international standing.

Of all Israelis, the Left should be leading post-assassination Israel toward a new hateless form of debate, for the sake of both democracy and of peace.



OLEG 97

Netanyahu the conqueror

Now that no one here in Israel knows which direction he's going, now that Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians don't even believe his occasional true statement; now that the Americans despair of him and are avoiding him, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has decided to conquer Europe.

On the surface, this doesn't seem too difficult. You take the air-force jet, Sara, the security contingent, an entourage and a bunch of journalists and you visit 10 Downing Street, Chancellor Kohl's residence, the Elysee Palace or the prime minister's office in Luxembourg, and present your arguments.

The message is always the same, and sometimes there's even a brief lecture: for the king of Spain, a short lesson on the Moslem conquest of Spain; for others, a few words on their mistaken interpretation of the Middle East as a colonialist or imperialist situation.

The section on peace is especially important: This part of the lecture reveals an uncompromising peace-seeker, whose sole aim is to achieve a true peace, but who is surrounded by a coalition that must be appeased, and an undemocratic Arab world that must change.

The security argument is accompanied by maps and numbers. Netanyahu counts 30 major terror attacks since the beginning of the Oslo process, only two of which came under his government. He attributes this to the fact that he truly understands security, as opposed to the late Yitzhak Rabin, or Ehud Barak, who had no security experience.

So how exactly has his government prevented terror? Ah, this secret he refuses to reveal to his hosts. He does, however bring with him a long list of complaints against the Palestinians, the mas-

ters of the "revolving door" policy, who, he charges, are not fulfilling their security commitments.

"But if security seems to have improved so much, then perhaps the Americans are, in fact, correct in arguing that the Palestinians are making great efforts to prevent violence," the European leaders ask.

"No," Netanyahu answers, as he differentiates between the vast

improvement he describes in the security situation, and the Palestinians' part in fulfilling the agreement.

As for the settlements—there the prime minister takes out a "minimizing" glass, and points out that all the settlements put together occupy only about one percent of the West Bank. He simply doesn't understand why everyone is making a big deal about them, and almost seems to be expecting his hosts to suggest that he actually embark on an expansion of the settlements.

THOSE ACCOMPANYING the prime minister are delighted. Sometimes they don't even wait until they've actually left their hosts before whispering loudly to

him, "you gave it to 'em, but good." Their leader has come to Europe to deliver its leaders a winning blow.

They are especially happy when Netanyahu criticizes European decisions with regard to the Middle East, and the Europeans nod politely, as if they were discussing a draft that could yet be changed, and not decisions that have already been publicized in the world media.

Apparently Netanyahu comes home believing he has changed something. That the Europeans have finally understood him. That even they have now figured out there is another side to the coin.

Netanyahu should know: These attempts are too late. None of the European leaders he met recently took him seriously. True, only one of them ventured to tell him so, but that one stated clearly what the others say when they talk to each other.

Actors Shoshik Shani and Arik Lavie once staged a skit by Ephraim Kishon, in which an elderly husband convinces his wife to allow him to take a second wife.

The wife agrees, and the audience is impressed by her liberal attitude, until the skit ends with the words, "Every night, the same thing."

Netanyahu's performance ends the same way. The young man who promised to surprise the world a year-and-a-half ago, and who got everyone's attention, has turned into an old man in 18 months. His ability to make a good first impression has become irrelevant, because now it is time for the next round of meetings, and in these, his true, weak, and hapless self is revealed, just like the old man on the porch who gets permission from his wife, for the umpteenth time, to commit bigamy.

YOSSI BEILIN

The prime minister recently returned from Europe believing he has changed something, but none of the leaders he met there took him seriously

The writer is a Labor MK

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ON JEWISH DIVISIVENESS

Sir, - I am rather surprised that in "A question of tactic" (December 12), Jonathan Rosenblum criticizes the Reform and Conservative movements for dividing World Jewry because of the conversion bill. Surely, it was not them who created this problem. Rather, it was our Orthodox establishment here in Israel who created it by proposing this completely unnecessary bill. Even in the Likud and government many oppose this bill and only voted for it to keep coalition together.

Only about 20 percent of the population in this country are Orthodox. This means they are a minority and as such have no right to speak in the name of the whole population.

Among the secular part of the population many would like to take part in some religious activities but

because of the rigid and intolerant attitudes of the Orthodox establishment they refuse to join them. For those people the Reform and Conservative movements in Israel would be a reasonable alternative.

Of course their rabbis should have the same rights to officiate at weddings and funerals as Orthodox rabbis. Also, Mr. Rosenblum, please try to understand: Many people here who regard themselves as Jews and Israelis also want to be part of the modern Western world of the twentieth or twenty-first century. I wonder if some of our Orthodox rabbis here in Israel even understand the meaning of this.

Ra'anana.
 BERNARD NAIT

COMBAT SOLDIERS

Sir, - In reference to your editorial "Thanking combat soldiers" (December 22), I further humbly suggest that due to the considerably excessive hardship and risks they encounter compared to other, softer jobs, combat soldiers be granted extended and possibly even free

PUBLIC TOILET CRUSADE

Sir, - I would like to suggest that *The Jerusalem Post* start a crusade against filthy public toilets.

Perhaps it will help, especially if it alarms the Health Ministry and the major petrol companies, who are undoubtedly aware of the situation but are waiting for a public outcry.

My candidate for the most disgusting toilet is the one at the Sonei gas station at the traffic circle in Hadera.

The toilet bowl and walls appear not to have ever been cleaned. There is no outside door nor a lock on the stall door. No toilet seat, no toilet paper, no towels, and no soap. To make matters worse, there is a small sandwich counter attached to the gas station. I would hate to think that the food providers also use these facilities.

Caesarea.
 DAVID ISRAEL

Jerusalem.
 ELIEZER KROLL

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

65 years ago: On December 30, 1932, *The Palestine Post* reported at length on the Byzantine antiquities found in the Negev.

Proposals were discussed for the development of the canning industry in Palestine.

Potato growing and exports had passed the experimental stage and were now considered for exports and the local market.

50 years ago: On December 30, 1947, *The Palestine Post* reported that two huge "illegal" immigrant ships, *Pan York* and *Pan Crescen*, flying the Panama flag had passed through the Dardanelles on their way to Palestine. Another Hagana vessel, a small schooner, *November 29*, 1947, at sea for 18 days, was escorted by British warships into Haifa and the ship's 688 more "illegal" immigrants to Palestine

were deported to Cyprus.

A British soldier was killed, and two more wounded when armed men wearing battle dress and steel helmets cut the perimeter wire of the British Army camp at Tel Litvinsky and stole arms and ammunition.

A Government Medical Officer, M.S. Malouf, was killed near Bethlehem.

Three Jews were killed when Arabs launched a heavy attack on the Tel Aviv's Manshieh quarter where for the first time mortars were used. A party of 10 Jews entered Jaffa from the seashore and threw bombs in the area.

In Jerusalem a bomb thrown from a passing taxi killed 15 Arabs and injured scores more.

The Jerusalem Military Commander had prohibited the use of Jewish taxicabs on all roads until further notice.

Two Jews and two Britons were shot dead in various incidents in the town.

Arab attackers, using grenades and small arms fire, killed a senior member of Barclays Bank and wounded three other persons in Jaffa Road, opposite the Municipal Garden.

Returning home after night duty at the Hadassah Hospital on Mt. Scopus, five Jewish doctors were attacked in the Sheikh Jarrah quarter. They abandoned their car and made a dash for a Jewish house in the Shimon Hazadik quarter. The car which bore "Red Shield" markings was completely destroyed.

In the Negev a number of Jewish settlers were arrested by an Arab Legion patrol. Their arms were confiscated and their lorries returned unserviceable.

Alexander Zvielli

The budget bluff

SUSAN HATTIS ROLEF

passed, most of the Opposition's "achievements" will be reversed and the only amendments which will remain are those connected with the health system (as they should be) or resulting from the fact that the Prime Minister has apparently been affected by the panic generated by the media.

For the sake of the economic and social well-being of the state,

Ultimately the budget will pass because none of the coalition parties have a real interest in bringing the government down

Tsomet, for example, are dissatisfied with Netanyahu's policy vis-a-vis the peace process - especially his apparent willingness to hand over territories to the Palestinians in the West Bank. But they also know that the policy of any alternative government will be much worse from their perspective.

Gesher is dissatisfied with Netanyahu's social policy (or its absence), but knows that its chances of getting five Knesset Members (what it currently has) into the 15th Knesset are close to nil.

The 23 Knesset members from the three religious parliamentary factions have no way of knowing whether their number will not fall in the next elections, and they certainly cannot remember a government that was more receptive to their demands and wishes.

Thus, none of the coalition parties have a real interest in bringing the government down. Furthermore, especially in the Likud, there are many Members of Knesset who are not sure whether they will get reelected to their party's list for the 15th Knesset. In other words, most of the members of the coalition who are threatening to prevent the budget from passing, are bluffing.

Under the circumstances it is not clear why Netanyahu has been so busy giving in to the demands of his coalition partners, or even members of his own party, especially given the fact that the budget, as originally presented, appears to represent pretty accurately his own order of priorities. I would venture to suggest that while a few maverick MKs like Benny Begin might well decide to stay away from the final vote on the budget, the only minister likely to resign as a result of what is going on is the Minister of Finance, who is not a Member of Knesset.

The National Religious Party and

Yes or no

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

The language they use! Convolution time.

Lani Guinier, President Clinton's nominee back in 1993 to be the head of the civil rights division at the Justice Department, seized exultantly in *The New York Times* on President Clinton's question at the Akron forum on race. The question was directed to Abigail Thernstrom, the distinguished Harvard professor and coauthor with her husband of the epochal, *America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible*. She is one of the forum sitting there, and the president wheels on her and asks, "Do you favor the US Army abolishing the affirmative action program that produced Colin Powell? Yes or no?" The inherent situation is intimidating.

In the first place, the interrogator is the president of the United States, and people don't talk to the president in language they'd think appropriate in talking to their peers.

Moreover, there's a demagogic echo chamber in most audiences that reacts delightfully to politically correct stunts.

Prof. Guinier sighs, "Such an exchange could have influenced the fate of Proposition 209, which passed with 54 percent of the vote, yet the president was strangely silent..." What might Mrs. Thernstrom have replied?

Well, she could have taken the bull by the horns and asked, "Yes or no, do I favor the electoral system that produced Bill Clinton?" That would have been an entirely excusable quid pro quo. If the president had snarled out a response, she'd have had to make good her ultimatum. "No, no, Mr. President. Just say yes or no..."

The quite incidental victim of the exchange was Gen. Powell. He entered Reserve Officers' Training Corps in 1954 as a student at City College of New York, and what do you know? He graduated at the top of the college's ROTC class of 1958 with the rank of cadet colonel, the highest rank in the corps. Was affirmative action responsible for that? No, dear, affirmative action began seven years later. George Washington Carver made it without affirmative action - yes or no? Answer me that!!!

Language, language, the forlorn corpse of modern democratic exchange. Mr. Clinton is by no means the premier practitioner of verbal roadkill. Ted Kennedy set a high mark in his declaration opposing Judge Robert Bork for the Supreme Court—the famous remark promising that if he were sent up to the back of the bus and abortionists to the use of clothes hangers.

Last Sunday, asked to characterize Republicans, Senator Kennedy gave his straight-from-the-shoulder answer. "The Republican Party is basically anti-civil rights, anti-immigration, anti-woman and anti-worker." One likes to think that if such a statement were made at one of the little seminars conducted by Socrates, everybody would have risen and followed Socrates out into fresh, wholesome air.

But people don't mind. They have got used to it. And Senator Kennedy has acquired, in the plenitude of his prosperous career, a kind of creepy gravitas. His eyes shut just a little, his voice is level and calm and authoritative, and whatever issues from his lips is made to sound as if being escorted out by the National Academy of Arts and Sciences dressed in inaugural garb. What if in answer to a historical question he said, "The Nazis have been consistently misrepresented for the benefit of the merchants of death who got rich during the war." Would you not agree there'd be a moment of silence before the little buzz of wonder?

What did poor Prof. Thernstrom say? By the way, the president referred to her as "Abigail," as if she were the upstairs maid. She said, "I do not think that it is social preferences that made Colin Powell..."

"Yes or no," had been the president's order. Now he interrupted. "He thinks he was helped by it."

General Powell had been awarded 11 medals before affirmative action had got to first base. Prof. Thernstrom tried one more time. "The overwhelming majority of Americans want American citizens to be treated as individuals," she said. She even tried to make a point ever so slightly distinctive. "These preferences," she said, "disguise the problem. The real problem is the racial skills gap." But that was lost. Ward Connerly, the national leader of the fight for equal treatment under the law, has been granted a cameo appearance at the White House, at the next general forum on the race question.

What might he say in a world in which language is carefree and corrupt? Well, he might say, "Mr. President, the Democratic Party is basically anti-individual rights, anti-white, anti-property, anti-American. Isn't that right, Mr. President? Answer yes or no."

(Universal Press Syndicate)

The writer is a political scientist.

A consuming passion

Hand-made chocolate, once a delicacy available only abroad, is now being crafted at home. Allison Kaplan Sommer fills us in on the delicious details



Ruthi Melamed at work in her Ramat Hasharon chocolate shop. She is happy thinking small: 'I'm genuinely concerned about making chocolate that is excellent rather than creating a huge operation.' (Jonathan Bloom)

Do Israelis like chocolate? Well, let's put it this way. At the entrance to the second annual Chocolate Festival held in Tel Aviv last month, the Elite company posted a gigantic welcome sign composed of pieces of chocolate attached to a poster-board. Passersby were free to pull chunks of the creamy brown stuff from the board and indulge. Within minutes, crowds surrounded the sign. Within less than half an hour, all the chocolate was gone.

While Israelis may not consume the same quantity of chocolate as natives of France and Switzerland do, their level of consumption has always been more than respectable on an international scale. What has changed recently is the level of the quality of chocolate.

Just five years ago, anyone who traveled to Europe felt compelled to bring "the good stuff" home to share among friends and family. But one by one, the finest brands of European chocolates, such as Godiva and Neuhaus, have made it to Israel and can be found on the shelves of department stores and gourmet shops.

Some are sold in their own outlets in upscale spots such as the new Ramat Aviv mall. Despite the fact that their prices soar far above the local standbys produced by Elite and Vered Hagalil, they are succeeding.

But the true local chocolate revolution has been set in motion by ambitious Israelis who, after studying the art of chocolate-making abroad, have brought the joys of hand-made chocolates to their homeland. Here are the stories of two of them.

DON'T GO looking for Max Brenner. Although the artistically designed boxes of the veteran chocolate maker in Israel bear his signature, conjuring up visions of

a Swiss chef, swathed in white, who spends his days stirring pots of chocolate in some grand European tradition. But the truth is, Max Brenner is fictitious. Instead, meet Max Fichtman and Oded Brenner.

Brenner is a hip young man with a shaved head and an earring, usually clad in a T-shirt and jeans. Although he spends much of his time supervising the workers stirring the pots in the cramped kitchen of the flagship store in Ra'anana, his heart is out in the front of the shop, where the beau-

tifully designed boxes and intricately decorated chocolates are on display. Brenner prides himself on his marketing innovations: chocolates for special occasions decorated with "Mazal Tov" or "I'm Sorry." In collaboration with artist Nir Hod, he has created special boxes with romantic gifts, such as a chocolate together with a ring inscribed with the word "Forever"; chocolate with a preserved rosebud; a limited-run gift item called Theo - a small silver can filled with squares of chocolate to be added to hot milk to

try-making. This option sounded like the most creative and appealing and, as it soon became clear, he had a knack for it as well. After working in the local field for a while, he began to look overseas.

"I heard about a pastry shop in Austria, which took on apprentices. It sounded so romantic and special - the idea of living in a beautiful Austrian village near mountains where one could ski, and the idea of being an apprentice and learning at someone's feet the old-fashioned way." So Brenner headed for Austria. He spent the next few years commuting between Europe and Israel, working in Israel to earn money to support various apprenticeships in Europe; first in pastry, then in sugar sculptures, and finally in chocolate-making.

The apprenticeships were unpaid, he explains. "It was a straight trade-off. I gave them my labor, they gave me their knowledge. In retrospect, I see that the knowledge was far more valuable than any salary they could have paid me."

In Paris, Brenner found the "master" he had been waiting to meet - Michel Chaudun, one of the most famous chocolatiers in France. Chaudun's chocolates are in line with the French gourmet philosophy. For the French, quality chocolate is bitter chocolate made with real cacao solids. Belgians, by contrast, tend to create larger, sweeter chocolates. They vary their fillings, adding fruit or liquid centers, and they prefer milk chocolate and white chocolate.

Brenner worked for Chaudun for a year and a half and became a devout believer in his recipes and technique.

After this apprenticeship, Brenner returned to Israel to earn some money. He was offered a job at the Kapulsky cafe chain as a pastry consultant. It was at Kapulsky that he met Max Brenner's "other half," Max Fichtman.

With a background in baking, Fichtman had made aliyah from Denmark. They became good friends and Fichtman suggested that they open a small bakery. Brenner declined. "It was working in chocolate that I truly fell in love with; if I wanted any kind of business, it was chocolate." So they decided to open their first chocolate store in Ra'anana, near Max's apartment.

They created "Max Brenner" to give the name of the chocolates an international image. "We learned from market research that Israelis believe that quality chocolate comes only from abroad," said Brenner. "That's why all the printing on the boxes and all our publicity are only in English."

Brenner has become known as a savvy marketing and public-relations man who brought the Max Brenner name to the media forefront. But he insists that the publicity came to them.

Just a few weeks after they opened and word got around that hand-made chocolates had come to Israel, "all the talk shows were calling us, the children's programs wanted us to demonstrate chocolate-making. We were overwhelmed."

Brenner admits he is more interested in marketing and packaging.

never dreamed of anything resembling a career in chocolate. All I knew was that I wanted to do something different. I didn't want to follow the same well-worn path that all my friends were taking after the army - traveling for a year in South America or India, then going to study law or business. I didn't want to be like everyone else."

After completing his army service, he heard about government-supported courses in various trades. In the middle of the long list of electronic and mechanical skills, there was a course in pas-

try-making. This option sounded like the most creative and appealing and, as it soon became clear, he had a knack for it as well. After working in the local field for a while, he began to look overseas.

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Oded Brenner, a hip young man with a shaved head and earring, has become known as a savvy marketing and public-relations man who brought the Max Brenner name to the media forefront. (Jonathan Bloom)

his product than in tinkering with recipes. He is committed to the Chaudun tradition (he flies to France to meet with his "master" every month). Brenner loves fashion and believes that chocolate should not only taste good but be stylish as well. His idol is designer Jean-Paul Gaultier. Brenner's store contains a homage to Gaultier in the form of his famous bustiers sculpted in chocolate. And he aspires to market the Max Brenner name in chocolate the way world-famous fashion designers parlay their name into a range of products.

Following his success in Israel, Brenner has set his sights abroad. His ambitions focus on a city which he has never even visited - New York. "The going in Europe would be very difficult; people there are quite traditional and probably wouldn't go for my gimmicks. Americans are like Israelis - open and interested in what is new."

IF ODED Brenner is attracted to the art of chocolate-making, Ruthi Melamed is more drawn to the science of it. And while Brenner is living large, Melamed - at least for now - is happily thinking small.

Her spotless modest shop, Ruthi's Chocolates in Ramat Hasharon, opened just half a year ago, is an unobtrusive part of a largely residential neighborhood. Neat rows of chocolate and truffles, dark chocolate, white chocolate and cinnamon stand in wait for customers, as well as chocolate in the shape of small animals. She shuttles between the kitchen and the counter, patiently explaining the composition of each chocolate to her customers. Keeping a personal touch in her shop is important to her.

"In Europe, chocolate is a local product. Just like every neighborhood has a baker and a butcher, they have their chocolatier. I'm genuinely concerned about making chocolate that is excellent rather than creating a huge operation."

A slim woman, clad in a white uniform, she speaks with the accent of her native Britain. Melamed moved to Israel from the north of England 17 years ago, when she was 22. She grew up in a family with a love of fine food, with a soft spot for chocolate. Her father, a dentist, kept chocolates in his office to hand out to his patients and never viewed it as a conflict of interest.

When her husband's job took her and her two daughters to Belgium four years ago, studying chocolate-making seemed like a natural step. In addition to a passion for the product, Melamed has a background in design and, even more importantly, "I've got a very finicky personality, somewhat pedantic," which she says is important in the detailed work of creating chocolates. Unlike Brenner, Melamed fol-



Melamed is particularly proud of her chocolate filled with honey and a pine nut on top as well as her rosewater-filled chocolates. (Jonathan Bloom)

lowed a careful course of study for three and a half years, learning the principles of temperatures, gradually moving into making the most basic kinds of chocolates, such as chocolate-covered almonds, and slowly moving into more complicated chocolates with various layers of fillings. Her chocolate "guru," as she calls him, is a Belgian chef named Denief.

Much of the science of chocolate, she explains, has to do with temperature. She points to a machine in her kitchen that continuously stirs a pool of chocolate.

"This is called 'tempering' - when chocolate is raw." The chocolate she uses, which is dull and rough looking, is imported from Belgium. The process of heating and cooling and stirring is what makes it into the stiff, shiny stuff we crave.

"The idea of returning from Belgium and having a chocolate shop in Israel was my dream from the beginning. The fact that Max Brenner opened his place a few years before I returned was purely coincidence."

She is pleased, however, that in Israel, "there is a growing understanding of what's involved in chocolate and people interested in high quality. There is a myth that Israelis like only sweet milk chocolate," she adds. "But I was happy to find Israelis incredibly open to new tastes and appreciative of quality. I think it's because we have such a convergence of cultures here, and also because Israelis travel so much. I find it amazing that even young children will come into the shop and count out NIS 2.40 for a piece of really good culture."

She says her trim figure belies her weakness for the delicacy she produces. "I'm quite capable of going through a whole box, no problem." Her philosophy is that most things - but particularly chocolate - are fine in moderation. "I have a theory that chocolate is good for your soul. If you don't indulge every day, but once in a while, it is a good thing."

Chock full of chocolates

Those who create hand-made chocolates in Israel may be a small and select group today, but Reuven Goldberg is betting that chocolate-makers will soon be found in every town and perhaps every neighborhood.

Goldberg has not only opened his own deluxe chocolate store in the Malha Mall in Jerusalem in recent weeks, but he has gone into the business of importing top-quality raw materials from the Swiss company Carma Pfister, and chocolate-making equipment which he is selling to existing producers and to new chocolatiers who will open their own shops in the future.

Creating chocolates in the new Malha store, Har Zahav, is Reuven's sister-in-law, Dalia Goldberg. ("Har Zahav" is the Hebrew translation of "Goldberg," meaning "mountain of gold.") Dalia studied chocolate-making in Belgium and Switzerland, and the family has been selling her chocolate for two years.

Among those to whom Reuven

Goldberg has already sold equipment is Michael Balog of Kiryat Tivon, who has been in the chocolate business for the past three years. Balog, whose nickname "Mishi" adorns his product, learned his craft over 20 years ago in Switzerland. The reason he and so many others have begun to create chocolate in recent years is largely due to relaxed import restrictions. "Years ago, it was impossible to import top-quality raw materials like cacao butter, without which it was impossible to make a high-quality product," he says.

And the success of Max Brenner played an important role in encouraging others to open shops. "Brenner was the trigger, just like the success of the Golan wineries created an appreciation for Israeli wine. Now the public appreciates domestic chocolate."

Another entrepreneur riding the trend is Gabrielle Hofstener of Ramat Gan, who can brag that she has chocolate running through her veins: she was born in Switzerland. Her training in

chocolate, however, took place in Strasbourg, France, with famed chocolatier Christian. In business for a year, she sells her chocolate from her Ramat Gan home, but her primary outlet is sales in stores. Her chocolates are sold in the Dr. Lek ice-cream chain, the Shmueli gourmet shops in Herzliya and Tel Aviv, and she hopes to begin providing hand-made chocolate to the numerous espresso bars in the greater Tel Aviv area.

Gabrielle's: 23 Dr. Eliahu Street, Ramat Gan, (03) 534-9276
Mishi: Zeid Center, Kiryat Tivon, (04) 983-5722
Har Zahav: Malha Mall, Jerusalem (02) 583-1177
Max Brenner: 100 Rehov Ahuza, Ra'anana, (09) 742-6412

23 Rehov Emek Refaim, Jerusalem, (02) 561-2123
280 Dizengoff Street, Tel Aviv, (03) 546-1197
Ruti's: 49 Ussishkin Street, Ramat Hasharon, (03) 549-2895
-AKS

Yes or no

Prescription for disaster

There are certain situations in life that emphasize the vast distance between being a child and being a parent; but perhaps none more than being sick.

We're not talking about serious illnesses here, which are devastating at any age.

What I am referring to are the usual colds and flu which are currently running rampant in this petri dish of a country, most extensively in the schools and day-care centers, where all the children of Israel seem to be involved in a nonstop game of Pass the Microbe. I could swear it takes place in an organized fashion.

I can hear them plotting now: "It's wintertime. OK, Avi, tell you what: this week I'll get the ear infection, you get the stomach virus, and Dafna will deal with the hacking cough. Next week, we'll trade. Deal?"

We relate to their reasons for wanting to swap diseases. I remember the days when being sick was a pleasure.

If I recall correctly, the trick was to get sick enough to stay home from school but not too sick to enjoy it. I remember long days cuddled under my quilt, sipping chicken soup, reading trashy novels and watching inappropriate daytime television.

If one was lucky to have a flu of the contagious variety, friends were also home sick, and one could add long conversations on the phone to the list of activities. And perhaps best of all was being the object of intensive care by the resident Jewish Mommy, who spent her time tooling back and forth between the bedroom and kitchen, delivering soup, tea, and toast. Heaven forbid sick children should fetch such things themselves: the mere act of your feet touching the cold floor could turn the run-of-the-mill flu into pneumonia.

All this fun turned me into, while not exactly a hypochondriac, someone who was not averse to being ill. My slightly warped enjoyment of sickness continued through college, where the flu was always a good excuse to get an extension on a term paper.

Later, as a single working adult, it was a way to catch up on the soap operas and take a break from office politics.

But when you're the Jewish Mommy, the fun is over! Even the whiff of a germ crossing the threshold of your home can turn your life into a living nightmare.

As I write these words, the majority of mothers that I know are home nursing the illnesses of their various offspring.

It can be the most isolating of situations: you can't run errands because you don't want your child's condition to worsen; you can't get together with other mothers with the same plight because you don't want your kids to sneak off and trade diseases.

So instead, you commiserate about your situation on the telephone, hoping that viruses can't penetrate the phone lines.

The worst-case scenario takes place when Mom herself picks up the germs her kids are wielding.

A friend of mine is in this situation, home with severe bronchitis which she caught from her two small children who were home sick the past week.

Here is her report from the front lines: "All I need is a day or two in bed to recover, but do I get that? No way. Since the kids have been sick, one or the other has been up all night, so I haven't gotten to rest nights, let alone during the day."

"To top it off, now that the kids are finally showing signs of getting better, Hanukka vacation is here, and the day camp I was going to send my son to has been canceled because too many of the children are sick."

"So I've got him home again. Now I have to miss another week of work. Perfect. Why is it that when fathers are sick, the world comes to a stop, everyone leaves them alone and tiptoes around them, and soon they're up and running and out the door to work? But mothers? Forget it."

This friend, by the way, is married to one of the sweetest, most helpful, egalitarian guys around. When she starts letting loose against men, you know times are tough.

"Men try, but what can you do when the kids scream for Mom and run into the bedroom? Either that happens, or my husband locks horns with one of the children and I have to pull myself out of bed to break up the fight. Either way, I don't get much of a chance to recover."

Then she adds, only partially delusional from the drugs she is taking to fight her illness, "You know, it's times like this that lesbianism seems like a reasonable option. It would be so wonderful having a woman partner—a nice lesbian like K.D. Laing or Melissa Etheridge [two recently uncloseted pop stars] to look after me, make me soup, watch my kids, and keep the house neat so that when I finally stumble out of my bedroom, I don't encounter a disaster area. As for sex, who cares? When I feel this bad, it doesn't interest me much anyway."

Our conversation was interrupted by call waiting and she had to get off the phone. As it turned out, it was her workplace calling to find out if she was ever coming into the office again.

Then my phone rang again. It was another friend, who had just returned from taking her son to the doctor for the umpteenth time this month and she too needed to vent.

"I don't get it," she said. "We're all modern people; no one's a Neanderthal around here. So why is it just somehow understood that our husbands must go off to work, and that all of this is our problem? Do you think that things will ever be truly equal?"

"Sure," I answered. "Some day. Right around the time they find a cure for the common cold."

Homefront



Allison K. Sommer

My cousin the president

Janet Jagan has been dubbed a 'Jewish grandmother.' But Judy Flanders offers a different view of Guyana's new president



Janet Jagan: For a long time, during the early days of the struggle, she says she was the most hated person in Guyana.

When my cousin Janet Jagan was elected president of Guyana last week, the wire service stories invariably identified her as a 77-year-old grandmother. Before the election, People magazine ran a captivating shot of Janet with three of her five grandchildren in a hammock on her porch in Georgetown, the Guyanese capital.

Charming, yes. But what a confusing and, if I may say, sexist way to identify a vigorous, politically potent woman who has been uniquely modern since her childhood in Chicago. I'm not a bit surprised she has been elected president of a country—even a country in South America, formerly owned by the British, that most people know little about, save the infamous 1979 Jonestown Massacre.

To kiss her off as a grandmother! This champion of plantation workers, native Amerindians and women's rights. This co-founder of the frankly Marxist People's Progressive Party (PPP). This veteran of riots, bombings, jail and house arrest. This leftist firebrand who, with her husband, led the drive for Guyana's independence from Britain in 1966. This editor of the *Mirror* newspaper in Georgetown from 1972 to 1997. This founder of two art museums, longtime member of Parliament and former acting ambassador to the United Nations. This 1997 recipient of UNESCO's Gandhi Gold Medal for Peace, Democracy and Women's Rights.

Her father and mine were born in Missouri, as our paternal grandparents had been. In the 1930s, when I was growing up in Chicago, dark-haired, nearsighted and plain, I looked up to my beautiful cousin Janet, a slim and blue-eyed blonde, as glamorous as a movie star. She had lots of dates because of her beauty and dash, but she also pursued flying, art and politics.

Before Janet was out of her teens, she took flying lessons with money earned from part-time jobs. That's as far as she got, though; flying was too expensive. The family never had much money. In hopes of serving in World War II, Janet quit college to enter nursing school, and along the way, cared for our grandfather in his last illness.

Before she graduated, she fell in love with a handsome young dentist from Guyana who had recently completed his studies in the United States.

Cheddi Jagan was the eldest of 11 children born on a sugar plantation to parents who had come to South America from East India.

In 1943, he and Janet eloped. Their wedding is memorialized in a photo taken in a "three-for-25 cents" booth, which shows two exceedingly good-looking and happy people. They headed for

Guyana, where Cheddi opened a dental clinic. In a country where the majority of the population is either Indian or black, Janet was noticed and not always favorably.

All the parents were appalled by the marriage. My uncle Charlie raged, and he never saw his darling daughter again. Guyana was too far away and too expensive to visit; he died in the 1950s. My Aunt Kitty more or less got over it, took care of Janet and Cheddi's daughter, Nadira, during a dicey time in Guyana in 1964, and even made a couple of trips there herself. The elder Jagans were soon won over by their daughter-in-law's simple style. She endeared herself forever when she and her husband, who rarely spent any of their skimpy earnings on themselves, paid for the education of Cheddi's siblings.

Janet worked as Cheddi's dental nurse. Radicalized by the Depression, she began to think about those people existing with too little money, too little hope and too little power. In Guyana, particularly on the sugar plantation where her father-in-law worked, she observed them up close. It was the plight of the workers that first got the Jagans' political juices going. They became active in union work, then formed the PPP—which won some and lost some. They had a hard time coping with the British, the US, the CIA and the opposition People's National Congress (PNC). Ejection from office. Jail. Rigged elections. After 28 years of struggle, Cheddi was elected president in 1992 and served until his death from a heart attack in March.

I guess it's inevitable that Janet now has the "widow president" stigma. It's true that women sometimes follow their deceased husbands or fathers into office, but Janet was never anything but Cheddi's equal political partner. For a long time, during the early days of the struggle, she says she was the most hated person in Guyana. Living in Guyana was no picnic, either. Most of that time, there was no water, no electricity and a scarcity of basic supplies. A lot of their friends left—for the US, for Canada, for England. Janet never had any ambition to

be president of Guyana. She loved all the other things she did—particularly the few months she substituted as UN ambassador and had time to enjoy New York theater and art. We spent a lot of time together there the year after Cheddi was elected. She also would have been content to go on running the *Mirror*—where she not only wrote muscular editorials but also initiated and wrote most of a children's page and other homey features. During her election campaign, the opposition tried to stir up the ashes of the old hatreds, attacking her race and her gender.

But "of all the vile things they said, these didn't mean a pin," she said.

As president of Guyana, Janet now has a daunting job. There's a huge foreign debt accumulated during past administrations, which Cheddi sought, not always successfully, to have written off. There's an urgent need to rebuild the infrastructure—schools, hospitals, roads for farmers. Electricity is still a big problem, but one Janet has promised to resolve in the first two years of her term. While there's a 92 percent literacy rate in Guyana, better education and the creation of more jobs for young people are also high on her agenda.

Guyana's ambassador to the US, Odeen Istmael, says that one thing Janet is in a unique position to achieve is bringing together the country's two largest race groups. Guyana, approximately the size of Kansas, has about 800,000 residents, 59 percent of them Indian, 37 percent black. "She is in a minority, herself," he notes.

In an unusually quiet election—no riots, no looting as in 1992—Janet had a large crossover vote from blacks, particularly in areas where there are numerous public service projects under way from Cheddi's term as president. She would call the presidency her latest job. I call it her destiny. I think her country is lucky to have her—a pragmatic, democratic woman who spends a lot of her time at the openings of new schools, new roads, new businesses as her country tries to move ahead once again.

(The Washington Post)

GRAPEVINE BY GREER EY CASIMAN

The China connection

"Don't I know you from somewhere?" asked Israel's ambassador to China Ora Namir as she broke away from the entourage of Chinese Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen at the dinner hosted in his honor at the King David Hotel Jerusalem for the Promotion of Israel-China Relations. The grinning individual to whom she addressed her remark was Agriculture and Environment Minister Rafael Eitan, who quipped in return "Good evening Madam State Comptroller." His grin growing broader, Rafal turned to bystanders for confirmation. "It's the same hair-style isn't it?" he queried.

After the dinner was over, Peres and Namir sat together in a corner of the hotel lobby and caught up with each other's news and with Labor party developments. But during the dinner itself, both were gratified to hear Qian praise Namir for her contribution to improvements in bilateral relations. Turning to China's ambassador to Israel Wang Changyi, Qian commented that snags in the Middle East peace process will make it difficult for Wang and his wife, who is China's ambassador to Syria, to meet as frequently as they would like.

Balish, also a Shenkar graduate, has been working with major Italian fashion studios. Hollinger and Solomon, in addition to their \$5,500 prize for their joint body-conscious venture, have been offered the opportunity to participate in Milan Collezione Donna, a top-line Milanese fashion show which enjoys wide television coverage.

Yet another Shenkar graduate, Liad Cohen, brought added glory to Israel when she received the Bronze Prize in the fifth WFC (World Fashion Competition) International Student Fashion Contest in Gifu, Japan. What was particularly interesting in Cohen's case was that she used self-taught Japanese techniques and Japanese influences in her design concept. Her victory could be classified as a successful attempt at selling coals to Newcastle.

THERE was food flowing everywhere when the Israel Restaurants Association, in conjunction with the Soldiers' Welfare Association, got together at Hangar 11 in the Port of Tel Aviv for Benefood '98, a feed-your-face fund-raiser which netted NIS 500,000 for gifts for 3,500 members of the Israel Defense Forces who are soldiers without families. Well over a



Liad Cohen's prize-winning entry at an international fashion contest in Japan.



Dganit Hollinger and Nili Solomon took first prize.

Qian disclosed that long before the establishment of ties between Israel and China he and Peres would frequently meet in New York. Peres prepared the ground, he commented, but when it finally came to the treaty establishing diplomatic relations, the co-signer was David Levy. Qian said this showed that both major parties in Israel were interested in pursuing relations with China.

Among those attending the dinner were Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman, former Foreign Ministry director-general Reuven Merhav who as Israel Consul General in Hong Kong had also helped to spearhead diplomatic initiatives with China, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert, whose parents lived in Harbin

dozen restaurants provided the fress while Ahinoam Nini, David Broza, Arkadi Duchin and others provided the entertainment free of charge. Broza came from the US especially for the occasion and despite his jet lag became embroiled in an argument with Gideon Ben-Ami, owner of the New York chain of restaurants, about the quality of American food in Israel. At least one person with an American palate could have settled the question—former Maccabi Tel Aviv basketball star Aulcie Perry, who was one of hundreds of people who had flocked to the event.

MODEL Sigal Shachmon, known to many Israelis as the co-host of television's *Wheel of*



'Wheel of Fortune' co-host Sigal Shachmon—a shade darker.



Former Maccabi Tel Aviv basketball star Aulcie Perry.

before coming to Israel, Zev Sufot, who was Israel's first ambassador to China and is currently executive director of the Council for the Promotion of Israel-China Relations, Joseph Aretz, the former representative in Beijing of Aviation Products Marketing International, a member of the Eisenberg Group, Raffi Glick, the associate vice president of Corporate International Projects, and Moshe Schultzer, president of the Israel Diamond Institute.

THE rag trade may be in tatters, but it hasn't entirely lost its glitz as far as Shenkar College graduates are concerned. Dganit Hollinger and Nili Solomon have just romped off with the first prize in the *Mitelmoda* fashion design contest held in Milan, which is quite a coup, given the competition. This is the second time that Israel has participated, with top marks on both occasions. Last year's winner, Vivi

Fortune, is no longer a honey blonde. Selected to launch the new *Wella Viva Color* campaign, she had to go several shades darker and liked the new sultry effect so much that she decided to stay with it.

GUESS who was among the many non-Jewish volunteers who came to Israel in their youth? The November issue of *Premiere*, the movie and movie-star magazine, reveals that *Sigourney Weaver* came to Israel in 1970 to live on a kibbutz because she wanted to become Jewish. All her friends were Jewish, and her schooling had been so Wassy, she said in an interview, that she wanted to stand in the fields picking oranges and singing Israeli songs. Now she realizes that she wanted to become American Jewish "because those Israelis did not crack a lot of jokes. I thought it was going to be like a big Catskills."

The class reunion syndrome

Dear Ruthie, My husband and I just received an invitation to our high-school reunion. It was in high school that we met, and we have been a couple ever since. We have been in touch with a few of our friends from those days, but mostly by mail. My first reaction was one of excitement because I am curious to see how everybody turned out. And since we have been planning a trip in the spring anyway, we thought it was a lucky coincidence. But then we both got depressed. In our high-school year-book, I was named "best looking." My husband was elected "most likely to succeed." Now, when I look at myself, I can't believe what has happened to my looks since then. After having three children, I have gained about 30 pounds, and my hair is brittle and thinning. I admit I let myself go, but somehow I don't really notice it, except when I visit the States, and see how elegantly dressed all the women my age are. For his part, my husband feels embarrassed that the boy "most likely to succeed" is what he considers to be, at best, mediocre. Maybe I could lose 30 pounds by the spring—though I doubt I'll have the energy to do it. But my husband can't change his life from top to bottom by then. So now we both wish to avoid going altogether. What do you think we should do? Reunion Ruining Somewhere in Israel

Dear Ruthie



Ruthie Blum

that function. The second problem relates to your sense of yourselves in comparison with your peers—a problem as common as it is senseless. The latter problem is simple to tackle. All it requires is a little empathy and imagination. The empathy, to put yourselves in others' shoes long enough to consider that they, too, may be experiencing similar emotions about the reunion. Imagination, to picture the fact that the other players in the reunion scenario have aged as much as you, and have lived through disappointments and failures as much as you. Most of them may not have such glossy reputations, at least you and your husband had glossy reputations, which is more than most high-school students can claim. At least you are still together as a couple—an accomplishment I doubt many of your contemporaries can boast these days.

The problem of your lack of self-acceptance is one worth working on, regardless of whether you end up attending the reunion or not. If you feel that you are no longer attractive, it is no wonder you are 30 pounds heavier, or that your hair is brittle. And, if your husband feels unsuccessful, he might as well carry a sign reading "failure" around his neck.

Losing weight by spring will be a far more attainable goal if you spend the time learning to give yourself a break. Your husband, too, would do well to utilize the upcoming months to accept who he is, rather than trying to change his life so he can impress people at a party.

If you both can make even modest headway in this direction, the issue of the reunion will become less of an emotional burden, and more of a choice. And once it becomes a choice, the more likely it is that you will decide to attend.

Letters should be addressed to: 'Dear Ruthie,' POB 81, 91000 Jerusalem. For E-mail: ruthie@ipost.co.il

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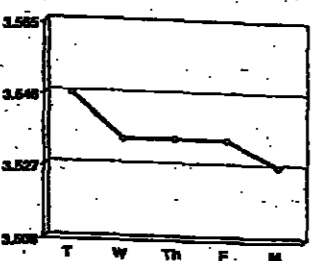
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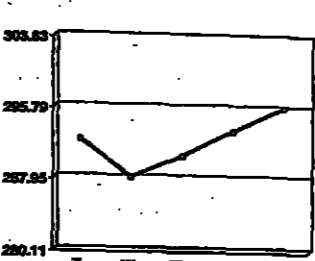
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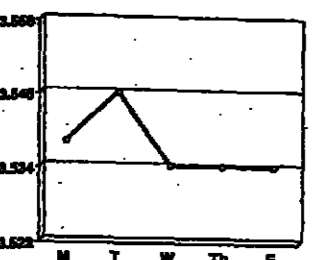
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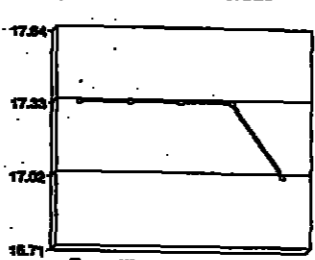
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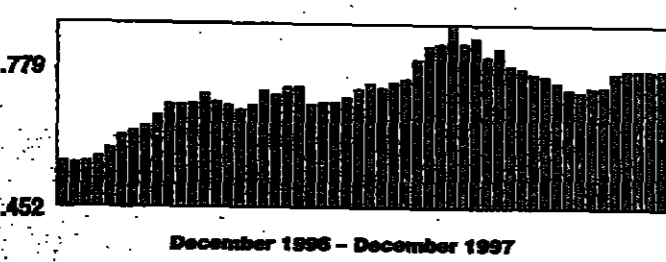
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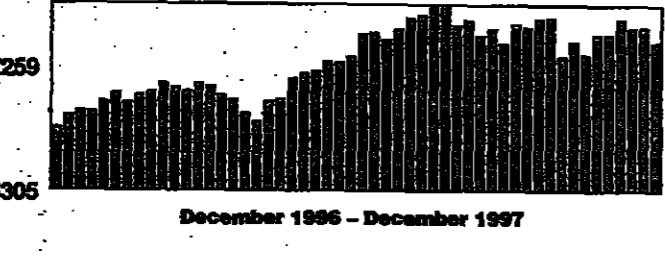
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Industrial imports, exports up

Imports of industrial inputs and industrial exports rose in October and November, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported yesterday.

In November alone, imports of industrial inputs rose 16 percent. Industrial exports, excluding diamonds, rose 7% in November, similar to the increases in September and October.

Investments in machines and equipment, as measured by imports of these goods, slowed to 5% in November, compared to 10% in October and between 15% and 25% during the May to September period. The rate of industrial production in the July to October period was 3%, compared to 4% to 5% in March to June. *Nina Gilbert*

Oil license for Rosh Ha'ayin area extended

The oil exploration license granted to Givot Olam Oil Exploration-Limited Partnership for the Rosh Ha'ayin area was extended yesterday by the National Infrastructure Ministry's petroleum commissioner, Givat Olam said in a statement.

Givat Olam now has sole drilling rights to the area through mid-July 1999, on condition the company produces a drilling contract by May 1, 1998, and commences drilling no later than December 31, 1998.

Givat Olam director Tovia Luskin traveled to the former Soviet Union this week to inspect drilling equipment and conduct negotiations about securing equipment and a work crew from a major drilling company there. According to Luskin, it is anticipated that importing equipment and labor will substantially reduce drilling costs. *Nina Gilbert*

Agriculture revenues down 26%

Agriculture revenues will register a 26 percent drop in 1997 to NIS 1.6 billion, the Agriculture Ministry said earlier this week. In 1996, revenues fell 20%.

The ministry attributed the drop to several factors, including a drought in the South that damaged the fields as well as damage fruit crops sustained in the North. *Jennifer Friedlin*

Police snag illegal foreign workers

By JENNIFER FRIEDLIN

Police yesterday arrested 80 foreign workers who were here illegally, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs said yesterday.

Most of the workers who were snatched in the operation came from Colombia, the Philippines, Romania and Turkey, the ministry said.

In the past year, the government has deported about 4,000 illegal foreign workers.

According to the ministry, the Israeli workforce is comprised of

245,000 non-Israelis, compared to 125,000 in 1990. With a total workforce of some 2.2 million, this means that more than one in every 10 workers is non-Israeli—a foreigner or a Palestinian.

The figures suggest that the number of illegal foreign workers in the first six months of the year was anywhere between 75,000 and 120,000. Many workers remain in Israel illegally once their permits expire.

The increase in foreign workers has not been fully offset by a comparable decrease in the number of Palestinian workers, said Bank of Israel research department deputy head Karnit Flug. This means some of the increase has come at the expense of Israeli workers, who cost more to hire.

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Central bank leaves interest rates unchanged

Frenkel: Planned budget cuts must not hit growth potential

By DAVID HARRIS

The 1998 state budget must not include cuts to infrastructure, R&D, education and professional training, Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel said yesterday, after announcing that the central bank will leave the key leading rate unchanged next month at 13.4 percent.

This decision followed the publication of a -0.3% consumer price index in November. Inflation is now expected to end the year well inside the government target of 7-10%.

Lower inflation will help the country increase economic growth, a statement from the central bank said. In order to achieve renewed growth, the government must also

keep a grip on expenditure and continue showing fiscal discipline. Furthermore, the ongoing public sector wage negotiations must not result in increasing inflation.

Frenkel pledged his full support for Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman's attempts to pass the 1998 budget, which includes a budget cut of NIS 2.3b. and no increase in taxation.

"The finance minister has already said, and I support him in this, that if for political reasons there has to be a change in the distribution of the cake in one way or another, he will consider this, but it would be wrong to break the overall framework of the budget," said Frenkel. "The citizens must be aware, that if

the government on the face of it gives them more, that it will also impose additional taxes."

Turning to the issue of unemployment, Frenkel said the figure recently quoted suggesting 200,000 jobless is inaccurate. The problem is serious and must be addressed immediately, but solutions will not appear out of thin air. It will take a long time to eradicate this structural problem, he said.

Cutting public expenditure is a good thing, but not when it comes at the expense of job creation, he said. Infrastructure investment is key to forging new places of work, along with a good education system both in school and beyond and spending on R&D. Unemployment

among Israelis is not helped by the presence of a quarter of a million foreign workers and Palestinians.

Referring to the bank's tight monetary policy, Frenkel said "high inflation does not create jobs, budgetary deficits don't create workplaces, they only increase the future tax burden and therefore damage the desire of investors to expand [their interests]."

Frenkel called for the government to take a long-term approach to the budget and a variety of other economic spheres.

"The minister that pressures to raise expenditure and the government that pushes to increase spending, or the MK that does so, must realize there is also a judge-

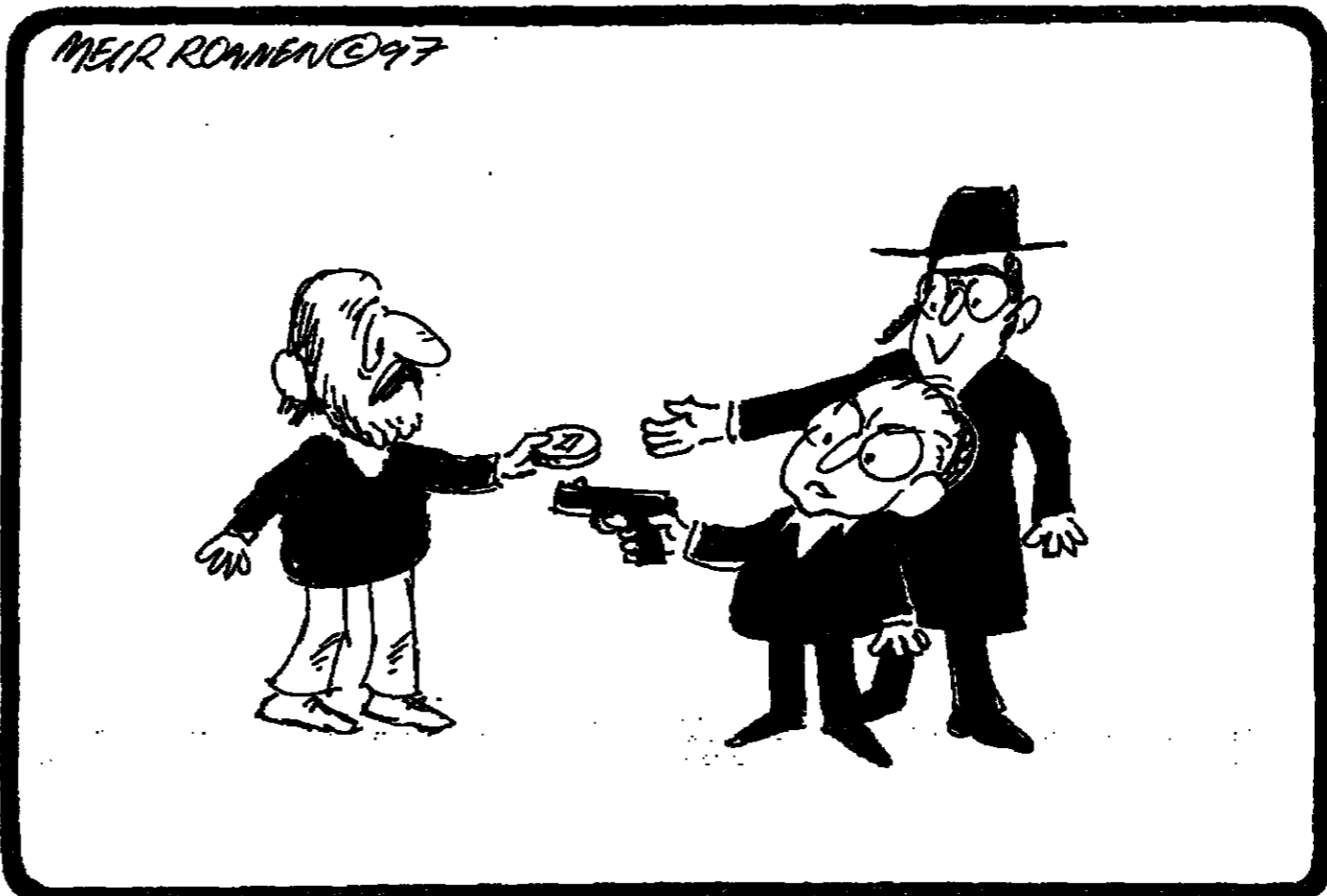
ment day," said the governor.

In order for the government to meet its various economic targets by 2001, there must be greater competition, less disruptions from monopolies, higher productivity levels and greater liberalization for citizens to do as they please on the financial front.

With regard to the controversial health budgeting reform proposals from the Treasury, Frenkel said the health system is expensive, but that if one spends more on health the money must be removed from another source.

"The economy can be put back on the right track "but this will take not months, not quarters, I say a number of years," Frenkel said.

'He's also unemployed'



Hilton chain returns to Jerusalem

By DAN GERSTENFELD

After almost five years, the Hilton chain is returning to Jerusalem on Thursday with the opening of the Jerusalem Hilton in the Mamilla district overlooking David's Citadel and the Old City.

The 385-room hotel, which is part of the Mamilla complex, cost \$100 million to build. The Hilton chain ran a hotel at the entrance to Jerusalem during 1975-1993, but the management of the hotel was given over to the Holiday Inn chain after Hilton signed an agreement to run the new hotel.

The new complex, which includes a shopping mall, luxury residences and two hotels, was built by Elrov. The company is currently building a second hotel in the same area, the City Hilton. The second hotel, which will have less elaborate facilities, is expected to open in 1999.

Alfred Akirov, Elrov's managing director and chairman, said that he is considering taking Elrov Hotels public on Wall Street. He said that the offering depends on developments in world markets.

The Mamilla project is divided into residential, commercial and tourist areas. The com-

mercial area includes a pedestrian mall lined with stores, a 200-room hotel, apartments and offices. David's Royal Residence, a luxury apartment complex of 36 units, also is in the Mamilla quarter.

Akirov said that the slowdown in the property market did not affect the sales of the luxury apartments. He said that most of the apartments were sold to local and foreign residents.

Last month, Elrov announced that it plans to buy for \$10.2 million the 50 percent of the Givat Amal project in north Tel Aviv which it has not yet acquired. Akirov said that he has no plans for further investments in the near term.

South Korea's creditors discuss funding package

By BILL AUSTIN

South Korea's main creditors gathered in New York yesterday to approve a new funding package, including debt rollovers and a group loan of one year or longer, to give the country more time to rebuild its shattered economy.

Korea needs longer-term funding to reduce the daily pressure on its commercial banks to repay debt. The banks must pay back at least \$28 billion by the end of February. US, European and Japanese banks are so far only willing to extend many of the loans for a matter of days or weeks.

"They will be discussing some kind of syndicated facility," at the meeting, said Kang Chung Won, managing director at Bankers Trust New York Co. in Seoul.

A group, or syndicated, loan from foreign banks will benefit both Korea and the foreign banks by reducing the threat of default. The banks are holding out for a guarantee from the Korean government that covers some private

debt before they arrange the new loan.

"We don't want this Sword of Damocles hanging over us every week," said Guillaume Lejondre, senior country manager at Credit Agricole Indosuez in Seoul.

Korea's currency, the won — down 40 percent this year — rose 7% today against the US dollar on optimism banks will reschedule loans to Korean banks. The Korean stock market is closed this week for the New Year holiday.

Longer-term financing would eliminate the high cost and the uncertainty of seeking daily loan extensions.

Foreign banks are charging Korea high interest rates to roll over loans, as much as 6 percent — points more than the London interbank offered rate for a one-month extension, according to Korean and foreign bankers. Just six months ago, such rates were as low as 0.25 percentage point more than Libor.

Korea's central bank, meantime, is charging its commercial banks 10 percentage points above Libor to borrow foreign exchange. Foreign banks are under pressure from authorities at home to play a greater role in bailing out Korea. Thirteen countries agreed last week to provide \$8 billion of emergency aid in return for faster economic reform. That money will augment funds already lent to Korea by the International Monetary Fund and others.

Because Korea used much of the

money to repay major US, European and Japanese banks, the contributing countries want those creditors to reschedule old loans and making new ones available.

Executives from J.P. Morgan & Co., Chase Manhattan Corp., Citicorp, Bank Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd. and others were meeting yesterday at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Societe Generale will represent France at the meeting, bankers said.

Korea has at least \$100 billion of foreign-currency debt coming due within 12 months and its junk-bond credit rating makes any new bond sale more expensive. It has enough foreign reserves in place to meet repayments only for several weeks.

Granted, there has been some progress on the political front. The Korean parliament yesterday passed 13 financial reform bills to signal the country's commitment to change. The bills — conceived even before the IMF-led bailout — will help restore confidence in Korea's shell-shocked financial markets, investors said.

The bigger test will come later this year as the adverse impact of economic reforms hits home. The government expects unemployment to double and more companies to go bankrupt because of reduced spending, high interest rates and slower economic growth. Today, the government said the nation's jobless rate rose to a 15-year high in November of 2.9%, up 0.6 percentage points from October. (Bloomberg)

TASE foreign investment drops NIS 18.2b. in Oct.

The value of foreign investments on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange fell 5% in October to NIS 18.2 billion, compared to NIS 19.2b. in September, the Bank of Israel reported yesterday.

Since June, the value of foreign investments has fallen NIS 2b.

The central bank attributed the drop to the decline in the value of shares traded on the TASE. This was due, in turn to the crisis which affected all the world's stock exchanges, including the TASE, following the financial upheavals in the capital markets.

The decline in the balance of foreign investments may also stem from profit taking.

From January to June of this year the value of foreign investments in the TASE grew by NIS 8.4 billion, or 71%. Between January and October there was an overall rise of NIS

6.4 billion, or 54%, in the balance of foreign investments on the TASE.

According to the figures, the foreign investors' proportion of the total shares traded on the TASE fell to 12.6% in October, compared to 12.8% in July.

In December 1996 foreign investors comprised 11.6% of the investors on the TASE.

In October, the general public held 71.7% of the shares traded on the TASE, compared with 71.2% in July.

The provident funds and advanced training funds held 9.7% of the shares in October, while the mutual funds held 5.4%. The insurance companies held 0.6%.

The Bank of Israel further reported that the value of the public's asset portfolio grew by NIS 1.2 billion, or just 0.2%, in October, and totaled NIS 97.7 billion. (Globes)

Discount halts talks on five-day work week

Talks on changing to a five-day week at Discount Bank came to a halt yesterday, following a decision by Bank Leumi to stick with a 6-day week, works committee chairman, Riki Behar said. She said Discount's management got "cold feet" once Bank Leumi decided to keep its

branches open six days a week, even though employees are changing to a five day work week. The works committee notified the Histadrut that there was no point in holding talks, until management comes up with new proposals, Behar said. (Globes)

Year of the listless dragon

Southeast Asia's financial woes dominated an economically dramatic 1997

By MALCOLM DAVIDSON

Asia's economic meltdown has dominated one of the most dramatic years the economic and business world has seen in recent times — putting even the biggest company acquisitions in the shade.

Since the heady days of spring, when stock markets around the world were ticking off records on an almost daily basis, one Asian crisis after another has grabbed the headlines.

"Sell Asia" became the battle cry among foreign investors as speculative attacks on the currencies of the Asian tigers wrought havoc among states more used to receiving plaudits for their economic miracle.

First Thailand, then Indonesia and South Korea were forced to swallow their pride and go cap in hand to the International Monetary Fund.

Asia's troubles helped trigger a global stock market slide at the end of October — nearly coinciding with the 10th anniversary of the 1987 crash. Then Brazil and Russia wobbled as the contagion spawned among the Asian Tigers threatened to infect other emerging economies.

Outside the intensive care ward operated by the IMF, however, the corporate world saw some of the biggest mergers and acquisitions in history.

Europe's dream of monetary union at last looked unstopperable — barring unforeseen disaster.

Some economists have even talked about a new economic paradigm — an era in which the dream of sustained high growth and low inflation might be achieved by harnessing technological change.

Asia could be forgiven for looking back on 1997 as its *annus horribilis* — as Britain's Queen Elizabeth termed a particularly difficult year for the British monarchy in 1992.

South Korea's woes in the past few weeks have capped a year of roller-coaster fortunes in Asia that at one point saw stock markets like Hong Kong hitting record highs.

After repeated attacks on the Korean currency — the *won*, which destabilized banks — Seoul was forced to go to the IMF at the start of December for \$57 billion in emergency assistance.

Some analysts questioned whether even that would be enough to solve South Korea's problems, and veteran politician Kim Dae-jung warned Koreans of more hard times ahead when he won December's presidential



All indicators spell disaster: As Asian markets tumbled, people around the world feared troubles in Japan would trigger a global meltdown.

election. US and European economists worried about the impact of the Tigers' problems on their own companies and exports. But the collapse of Japan's fourth largest brokerage, Yamaichi Securities, and a slide in share prices and the yen invoked the possibility of an even greater nightmare — a global meltdown triggered by Tokyo. "There will not be a world panic sparked by Japan," Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto

pledged after meeting Southeast Asian leaders in Kuala Lumpur in December before going home to launch a new round of economic stimulus measures. Politicians and analysts welcomed Asia's efforts to try to restore stability, and some fund managers even asked whether it was time to go back into newly cheap Southeast Asian markets. Most strategists in a Reuters poll said Asian stock markets were likely to claw back losses

during 1998 and 1999 but would not emerge from the doldrums before the new millennium. The powerful head of the US Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, whose pronouncements have frequently convulsed markets, saw some benefits for the US from October's stock shakeout. The central banker who warned a year ago of "irrational exuberance" on Wall Street said the stocks turmoil that saw the Dow

plunge in October could be a healthy tonic for the US economy. But by December, the Dow Jones Industrial Average was back within sight of the levels it saw before October's slump, and many others of the world's biggest stock markets had rebounded too. Greenspan continued to warn, however, that despite talk of a new paradigm, inflation was not dead and that the ever-tightening

US labor market was storing up wage pressures. European Union leaders faced the opposite problem of what to do with a growing band of unemployed. With 18 million people out of a job, they pledged themselves in November to a package of measures aimed at finding new ways of getting people back to work. The market turbulence seemed to do little to stem a year of furious deal-making among compa-

nies on both sides of the Atlantic. Even before the year was out, corporate mergers and acquisitions worth more than \$800 billion had already been announced in the US — easily surpassing the 1996 record of \$649b.

Top of the list was WorldCom's \$35.91b bid for MCI Communications. WorldCom's record bid for its fellow US telecom company thwarted British Telecom's dreams of linking up with MCI in its bid to become a truly global operator.

In Europe two Swiss banks, Union Bank of Switzerland and Swiss Bank Corp., announced in December they were merging to create the world's second biggest bank and top fund manager with a portfolio of almost one trillion dollars.

Some US academics called the record-breaking wave of US mergers the result of fear, big bankrolls and the desire of companies to position themselves for the next leap in technology.

The big technology challenge was without doubt the Millennium Bug — the inability of many computers to distinguish between the years 1900 and 2000.

Estimates of how to prevent computer systems crashing as clocks tick over into the new millennium continued to soar.

Computer experts said the threat ranked right up with Asia's economic troubles, and one study put the cost of tackling the problem at up to \$280b.

European institutions have the added headache of gearing up their systems to handle the euro — the new common currency that some members of the European Union are due to adopt with the launch of monetary and economic union (EMU) in January 1999.

Only six months ago, the prospects for a timely launch of monetary union still looked questionable.

But with the approach of next year's key decision on which EU nations will qualify, analysts said it was difficult to see what could hold it back.

Finally, in a year of ups and downs, spare a thought for the embarrassment of Germany's industrial powerhouse Daimler-Benz AG and its Mercedes car company.

First its "revolutionary" new A-Class Mercedes tipped over during tests designed to simulate the sudden turns needed to avoid wild elk.

Then its new two-seater Smart car did the same — sending engineers back to the drawing board. (Reuters)

Between a patent and a hard place

The Israeli patent law has become a bone of contention in international trade

By NECHAMA GOLDMAN

Israel is on the verge of amending its patent law despite a tremendous outcry from international pharmaceutical companies and alleged pressure from the US Government and the European Union Commission.

If the changes pass, the amended law may cause irreparable damage to Israel's reputation. If the law remains as is, Teva, Israel's largest pharmaceutical company with sales of \$954 million in 1996 and \$825m. for the first three quarters of 1997, will take its research and development and manufacturing facilities to the US, where it will be able to conduct research proceedings that are banned in Israel.

"Teva remains here only because of Zionism," says Yehuda Livneh, manager of the patents department at Teva. "There is no economic advantage for Teva being here. It is trying to stay an Israeli company with management and activities in Israel. As soon as we move R&D out of Israel, it stops being an Israeli company."

"The drug companies are upset because they want a monopoly for as long as possible on individual drugs," continues Livneh, who is lobbying in the Knesset for the change in the current law. "An extra half-year or whole year on the market with no competition means hundreds of millions of dollars. It is all a question of straight economics."

If, as Teva claims, the proposed legislation does not really differ from the US law, why the uproar, the threatened law suits and trade boycotts? The proposed amendment will enable Israeli generic drug companies to develop generic preparations of patented drugs before the expiration of the patent.

The proposed law will give Israeli compa-

nies the right to carry out R&D in order to file for regulatory approval in countries with similar legislation (the US, Canada, and Hungary) even during the life of the Israeli patent (which typically lasts a year longer than the drug's US patent).

The US law allows ethical drug companies to file for an up-to-five-year extension on their patents. The extension is granted based on the amount of time it takes a certain drug to go through FDA clinical trials.

In Israel the extension will technically be the same but since the Israel Health Ministry grants approval to drugs after they have passed through the FDA regulatory process, the extensions are more likely to be granted for one to two years and not three to five as is common in the US.

Lastly, the proposed law will allow generic companies to supply raw materials to generic companies abroad for the purpose of registering the drug at different health ministries. To register a drug with the FDA, a company has to manufacture large quantities of tablets or capsules.

In the US there are no raw material manufacturers, so generic companies are forced to import raw materials. US law, therefore, has no specific requirements regarding this practice. "The real meaning of the law is that it will turn Israel into a 'copy-cat' country for drugs," says Richard Luthi, CEO of Luthi and Co., a firm specializing in patent law. "It will allow generic companies to register products in North America before they have gone off-patent in the local market. When a company spends \$500 million developing a drug, it wants to make sure it gets its money back."

Luthi, who is representing InterPat, a US body that lobbies for strong patent laws, argues that the proposed law will violate the

Trips Treaty, an international agreement which Israel signed in 1994 over the minimum standard for patent protection.

Livneh counters that the law was evaluated by former Israeli Supreme Court Justice Yaakov Maltz and by Mickey Kantor, the former US Trade Representative, and one of the architects of the GATT/TRIPS treaty, and both maintained that it does not violate GATT or the Trips Treaty.

Israel's patent law until now has only allowed generic drug companies, like Teva and Agis, the second largest generic drug company in Israel, to develop drugs during the life of a patent under what is called a compulsory license. This license could only be granted if there was no production of a given drug in Israel.

However, in 1995-1996 it lost two highly publicized cases to Eli Lilly for Prozac and to Wellcome for Acyclovir. Both companies claimed that Teva had abused the compulsory license privilege and infringed on their patents. The Tel Aviv District Court found in their favor. As a result, Teva began threatening to take its R&D facilities to the US, where it would be allowed to develop its drugs in peace if Israel did not amend its law. It garnered the support of the Manufacturer's Association as well as the other pharmaceutical companies.

"The true worry of Interpat," says Livneh, "is that Israel will set a precedent that will then be adopted by the European Union."

Today the European countries strictly enforce, with the exception of Hungary, patent protection. No R&D may be carried out by generic companies until a patent has expired. Two years ago, the European Parliament passed a resolution suggesting that the EU adopt the same amendment for generic development as the US. The Council

of Ministers are currently evaluating this suggestion. "The pharmaceutical companies do not want to see this become the status quo," says Livneh. "Israel is the battleground." The opposition is not rattled by Teva's proclamations. Luthi and another patent lawyer, Dr. Michael Cohen, a senior partner at Reino Cohen, Israel's largest patent firm which represents the large pharma companies Ciba Geigy, Merck, and Hoffman LaRoche in patent disputes, claim that Teva did some \$60 million in R&D in 1996 (it actually expended \$90 million according to its 1996 annual report, \$27 million of that sum came from grants and government participation) and provided jobs for 200-300 Israelis. Their counter argument is that the right environment will attract more money than Teva can provide. "Israel can become a hub for major pharmaceutical companies," says Cohen. "If Teva leaves Israel, it will cost the country a few hundred jobs. These will be more than replaced by the influx of companies coming to do research, joint ventures, build factories. Israel continues more medicines than all the surrounding countries. This makes it a very interesting country for pharmaceutical companies." Until now, regardless of the patent law, the big pharma companies have avoided investing in Israel because of the Arab boycott.

Zvi Vroman, CEO at Reino Cohen, concurs that Teva has a case. He feels that Teva should be allowed to reach an understanding with the big pharma companies on a case by case basis.

"The law may cause patent infringement in directions even Teva does not want," points out Vroman. "After all, it has a multiple sclerosis drug, Copaxone, which it is protecting under a patent."

BITS & BYTES

WITH JENNIFER FRIEDLIN

GEO signs distribution agreement with Tomen: GEO Interactive Media Group announced an agreement with Tomen Electronics, a Japanese electronics supplier, to distribute GEO's Emblaze product line in Japan. Tomen will be responsible for the marketing, sales, promotion and technical support for the line. Based in Givatayim, GEO develops authoring tools for pro-

ducing real-time multimedia on the Internet. **Israel taps Jordanians for hi-tech skills:** Jerusalem-based software company Malam Systems announced that it will employ about one dozen Jordanian programmers and engineers as part of the company's efforts to establish a joint Israel-Jordan software development company. Malam

and its Jordanian partner said they plan to initially invest \$2 million in the venture. The Jordanian joint venture will act as a sub-contractor for Malam and will eventually employ up to 200 workers, the company said. **Nexus closes APTEL purchase:** Nexus Telecommunication Systems announced the closing of the acquisition of APTEL Ltd., a

private company owned mainly by DSP Group Inc. Nexus has purchased, for a total of 925,000 Nexus shares, one hundred percent of APTEL shares. APTEL and Nexus are involved in the development of wireless communications technologies. **Tecnomatrix gets commitment from Boeing, Lockheed:** Tecnomatrix Technologies Ltd. of

Herzliya announced that two major aerospace companies, Boeing and Lockheed Martin, are expanding their use of CAPE tools. The announcement signifies the company's expansion into the aerospace industry. Tecnomatrix develops computer-aided production engineering (CAPE) software, used to design cars, airplanes and vehicles for heavy industry.

THE CONFERENCE CIRCLES
BY GUY CARLSON
The conference circles are a series of events... [The rest of the text in this block is extremely faint and difficult to read.]

RETZEF CONTINUOUS TRADING SHARES

Table listing various stocks under the RETZEF section, including columns for stock names, last prices, and changes.

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ISRAELI SHARES ABROAD

Table listing Israeli shares traded abroad, including columns for stock names, last prices, and changes.

AMEX

Table listing American Market Exchange (AMEX) shares, including columns for stock names, last prices, and changes.

NASDAQ

Table listing NASDAQ shares, including columns for stock names, last prices, and changes.

NYSE

Table listing New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) shares, including columns for stock names, last prices, and changes.

LONDON

Table listing London stock market data, including columns for stock names, last prices, and changes.

NEW YORK

Table listing New York stock market data, including columns for stock names, last prices, and changes.

INTERNATIONAL SHARES

Table listing international shares, including columns for stock names, last prices, and changes.

NEW YORK

Table listing New York stock market data, including columns for stock names, last prices, and changes.

*in local currencies

Table with columns: LAST, CHANGE. Lists various US stocks like UAL Corp, USG Corp, etc.

Table with columns: LAST, CHANGE. Lists various LONDON stocks like Allied Domeost, BAF Ind, etc.

Table with columns: LAST, CHANGE. Lists various PARIS stocks like Acor, Air Liquide, etc.

Table with columns: LAST, CHANGE. Lists various FRANKFURT stocks like Bayer, Daimler-Benz, etc.

Foreign Exchange Rates table listing rates for various currencies like U.S. Dollar, British Pound, etc.

Table with columns: Buy, Sell, Rep. Rates. Lists various currencies and their exchange rates.

NEW YORK MARKET INDEXES

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists NYSE, NASDAQ, S&P 500, etc.

OTHER MARKET INDEXES

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists FTSE 100, Nikkei, etc.

DOLLAR CROSSRATES (US)

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists Pound, Swiss, etc.

US COMMODITIES

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists Cocoa, Wheat, etc.

LONDON COMMODITIES

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists Cocoa, Coffee, etc.

SPOT MARKET METALS (US)

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists Silver, etc.

NEW YORK METAL FUTURES

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists Gold, Silver, etc.

LONDON METAL FIXES

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists Gold, Silver, etc.

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TASE rises on optimism about rates

Tel Aviv - Stocks rose yesterday on expectations that the central bank will lower interest rates during the first months of 1998 and that inflation will remain low.

Europe

UK stocks rose, with the benchmark index recording one of its best days this month on optimism that South Korea won't default on its debt.

Asia

Japanese stocks were mixed as government-run pension and postal funds bid up banks, offsetting declines triggered by concern a growing credit crunch will lead to more bankruptcies.

Wall Street

Stocks shot higher yesterday, restoring hopes for a year-end rally as many traders returned from an extended Christmas break.

Oil

Crude oil prices traded at an 18-month low as traders saw the earlier-than-expected resumption of oil exports from Iraq coinciding with the introduction of the 9.85 percent production increase the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries agreed on last month.

Precious metals

Palladium rose on concern that supplies of the precious metal from Russia, the world's largest producer, will be disrupted in the first few months of next year.

Others

Copper slumped amid persistent concern the economic slowdown in Asia will continue well into 1998 and also affect the out-

look for the base metal globally. Tumbling currencies, higher interest rates and slower economic growth in much of Asia have drastically reduced copper demand in the region in the past few months.

US bonds fall as Asia stabilizes

US bonds fell, sending yields to the highest in a week, as rebounding Korean financial markets and a rally in US stocks damped demand for the refuge of Treasury securities.

General Assistance

Emergency Pharmacies, Duty Hospitals, Police, Fire, etc.

Where to Go

Hotline for battered women, Rape Crisis Center, etc.

ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS

Table with columns: Currency, 3 MONTHS, 6 MONTHS, 12 MONTHS. Lists rates for U.S. dollar, Pound, etc.

ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS (continued)

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CURRENCIES

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists Dollar, Basket, Mark, Sterling.

COMMODITIES

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists Gold, Crude Oil, CRB, etc.

BONDS

Table with columns: Last, Change. Lists US 30-year T-bill yield.

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\$17.09 a barrel, the lowest price since May 20, 1996, and could sink further, traders said. They traded at \$17.12 a barrel.

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SPORTS

Rangers rally to edge Bruins

NEW YORK (AP) — Brian Skrudland scored with 23 seconds remaining Sunday to cap a three-goal rally that carried the New York Rangers to a 4-3 victory over the Boston Bruins.

also scored for New York.

Blackhawks 2, Mighty Ducks 0 Jeff Hackett stopped 27 shots and rookie Dmitri Nabokov and Alex Zhamnov scored goals in the second period for host Chicago in Sunday's only other scheduled game.

The victory enabled Chicago to snap a nine-game (0-5-4) home winless streak. The Hawks had not won at the United Center since beating St. Louis on Nov. 6.

The win also was the first at home this year for Hackett.

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, Pts, GF, GA. Rows include Boston, Chicago, Anaheim, and Eastern Conference Atlantic Division.

Table with columns: Team, W, L, T, Pts, GF, GA. Rows include New Jersey, Philadelphia, Washington, N.Y. Rangers, Florida, Tampa Bay, Pittsburgh, Montreal, Ottawa, Boston, Carolina, Buffalo.

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Hull out up to six weeks

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Brian Tuckman will be out of the NHL for at least six weeks after suffering a knee injury in a game against the New York Rangers on Saturday. The injury occurred during the third period of the game.

Tel Aviv win sixth straight rugby match

Local rugby league leaders ASA Tel Aviv won their sixth game in a row on Saturday, beating hosts Hapoel Galil Elyon 25-22. Tel Aviv were ahead 18-0 at halftime, but the home team came back strongly and the final difference was one penalty.

With friends like these ...

LAGOS (Reuters) — Nigeria will not play countries hostile to its military rulers while preparing for next year's World Cup finals, a Nigeria Football Association (NFA) spokesman said yesterday.

Reiffel puts Aussies in box seat

MELBOURNE (AP) — Paul Reiffel hit a brilliant unbeaten 79 and then removed opener Gary Kirsten to put Australia in the box seat in the first cricket Test against South Africa yesterday.

Set to make an imposing 381 runs to win in a minimum of 120 overs, South Africa was 79 for one at stumps on the penultimate day.

Opener Adam Bacher overcame his indifferent tour form with a fine 34 and No. 3 Jacques Kallis was unbeaten on 40 at the close.

Bacher was dropped by Ricky Ponting off Glenn McGrath at short leg when the right hander had scored just one run.

The second-wicket pair batted boldly to defy the Australian attack for 98 minutes after Kirsten was bowled with just two runs on the board.

It gave Reiffel his 100th Test wicket in his 33rd appearance since making his debut against India in Perth in 1992.

Bacher and Kallis will start fresh on the fifth day in search of another 302 runs required for an unlikely win and a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Australia's lower order batting would have provided some encouragement for the South African batsmen on a wicket that has proved to be a monster on the first three days.

The threat of Shane Warne looms over the South Africans on the last day, but temporarily the leg spinner was smacked around the Melbourne Cricket Ground by Kallis.

Kallis hit Warne for two boundaries in an over despite the vicious turn he extracted off the bowlers' foot marks.

The home side recovered from a perilously-placed 146 for eight as Reiffel put on 62 in even time for the ninth wicket with Michael Kasprovicz (19) and another 49 with No. 11 Glenn McGrath (18).

Reiffel, who topped the batting averages against England and New Zealand this year, made his highest Test score. He improved on his 77 against New Zealand in Brisbane in the first test this year.

Since his recall as a replacement for the Ashes tour, Reiffel, 31, has scored 463 runs at an average of 66.14 with three half centuries.



EXPRESS LANE — South African batsman Jacques Kallis dispatches a ball from Shane Warne as wicketkeeper Ian Healy looks on. Kallis finished the day on 40 not out to help South Africa to 79 for one and the end of the day's play.

bowler Allan Donald. Donald, who ripped through the Australian top order on the third evening, added the wicket of Ian Healy, Warne and Kasprovicz to finish with 6-59.

When he removed Kasprovicz, Donald became South Africa's leading wicket taker — 171 wickets in 36 Tests — to pass Hugh Tayfield's 170 wickets in

37 matches. Donald took three wickets in Australia first innings and has completed a match bag of 9-133.

Skipper Mark Taylor batted patiently for his 59 runs and put on 62 runs with Ponting after Donald had given the home side a scare, reducing them to 44 for four.

Ponting, Australia's first-innings hero with a brilliant 105, con-

tributed another 32 and was one of the four to fall before lunch.

Australia lost 4-79 before lunch, including Taylor in controversial circumstances.

Off spinner Pat Symcox had Taylor caught at first slip by Daryll Cullinan but there was doubt over whether the skipper hit the ball which spun a long way out of the footmarks.

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CRITICS' CHOICE

CLASSICAL MUSIC

MICHAEL AIZENSTADT

Violinist Julian Rachlin and pianist Itamar Golan play sonatas by Beethoven, Franck, Prokofiev and Brahms tonight (8:30) at the Tel Aviv Museum.

The Liturgia festival of sacred music presents an evening of cantorial music tonight (8:30) at the Henry Crown Symphony Hall in Jerusalem with cantors Haim Adler, Naftali Herstick and Moshe Heshel accompanied by Raymond Goldstein at the piano.

ENGLISH THEATER

HELEN KAYE

Neil Simon is great when it's cold outside because his wise comedies warm you. The Hadassah Center Stage Theater presents his somewhat autobiographical Brighton Beach Memoirs about growing up in a Jewish family during the Depression.

At the Cameri, Yossi Graber is the infamous Mr. Wolf, a rereading by Hillel Mitelputnik of the classic Volpone. In this one, Isaac Wolf is a broiled master who'll stop at nothing to fleece his own brothers because they fleeced him.



Violinist Julian Rachlin performs tonight at the Tel Aviv Museum.

TELEVISION

ELANA CHIPMAN

The Simpsons, one of the all-time classic cartoon series, is back on Channel 1, tonight at 7:34. Homer and Marge and their children Bart, Lisa and Maggie return with more off-beat stories which cast a different perspective on modern life.

MGM studios is trying to recapture the success of the 1980s series Fame with a new series, Fame L.A. Set in Venice, California, the series provides an insight into the souls of a group of young people who came to L.A. from all walks of life to seek fame and fortune.

CHANNEL 1 (11) 6:30 News flash 6:31 News in Arabic 6:45 Good Morning Israel

EDUCATIONAL TV (11) 8:00 Dog Lovers' Channel 10:00 Lullaby Studio 10:00 Cartoons 15:00 Pretty Butterfly

CHANNEL 1 (11) 15:30 Super Ben 16:30 Pink Panther 16:00 The Mask 18:30 Zappas 16:58 A New Evening 17:34 Zap 18:15 News in English

ARABIC PROGRAMS 18:30 Apropo 18:55 Ramadan 19:00 News

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CHANNEL 1 (11) 15:30 Super Ben 16:30 Pink Panther 16:00 The Mask 18:30 Zappas 16:58 A New Evening 17:34 Zap 18:15 News in English

ARABIC PROGRAMS 18:30 Apropo 18:55 Ramadan 19:00 News

HEBREW PROGRAMS 18:30 News flash 18:31 8th Hanukka 18:32 9th Hanukka 18:33 10th Hanukka

CHANNEL 2 (22) 6:15 Today's Programs 6:30 Cartoons 7:00 Reshet Morning 9:00 Public 11:00 Sinbad

CHANNEL 3 7:00 Good Evening 7:30 Love Story with Yossi Siyas

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PRIME TIME TV

Table with 8 columns (1-8) and 8 rows (19:30-23:00) listing TV programs and channels.

19:55 Roseanne 20:20 Married with Children 20:45 Helen and the Boys 21:15 Beverly Hills 90210

MOVIES

19:00 National Geographic Television 20:00 V.I.P. 20:30 The Ticket 21:00 Dataline: Family Secret

WEATHER section with a map of Israel and surrounding regions, showing weather conditions and temperatures.

WINNING CARDS section featuring a daily chance drawing with prizes like K-10, Q-10, J-10, 8-10, and 8-K.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

ACROSS 1 Incorrect kit means trouble (8) 6 Pub arranged to have meals in every bar (6) 9 Demon drink? (6) 10 Tides ebb about workers seeking alluvial deposit (8) 11 Sole assistance for those travelling in the Arctic (6) 12 Possibly secure and free from danger (6) 13 What an MP stands for (12) 16 It cannot safely be ignored (6,6) 19 Why brides may conceal having mixed parentage (6) 21 His paper turned to stone (8)

Cryptic crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-25.

SOLUTIONS section providing answers for the cryptic crossword puzzle.

QUICK CROSSWORD

ACROSS 1 Sprung (5) 4 Fill with air (6) 9 Regret (7) 10 Creed (5) 11 Notch (4) 13 Daybreak (7) 13 Draw (3) 14 Congar (4) 16 Reverberate (4) 18 Mien (3) 20 Disordered (7) 21 Pizander (4) 24 Idol (5) 25 Renegade (7) 26 Unctuous (6) 27 Dizzy (5)

DOWN 1 Commission (6) 2 Droll (5) 3 Decoy (4) 5 Imperil (8) 6 Agency (7) 7 Rubber (6) 8 Poetry (5) 9 Undiplomatic (8) 15 Ignorant (7) 17 Performing (6) 18 Sharp (5) 19 Tumbstone (6) 22 Chose (5) 23 Venom-tooth (4)

Bucs hold Sanders in 20-10 win over Lions

Inside

Celtics top host Lakers
Page 18

Reiffel puts Aussies in command
Page 17

Sports Editors
Joe Hoffman & Ori Lewis

LSU beats Irish in Independence Bowl

SHREVEPORT, La. (AP) — With Kevin Faulk, the Southeastern Conference's leading rusher, out with a twisted ankle, backup Rondell Mealey rushed for 222 yards Sunday, including 26 on the game-winning drive in the third quarter, as No. 15 Louisiana State University beat Notre Dame 27-9 in the Independence Bowl. Mealey also set Independence Bowl and LSU records with a 78-yard run in the fourth quarter. He was voted the offensive player of the game.

TAMPA (AP) — The final seconds ticked off the clock and the pewter and red-clad Tampa Bay Buccaneers vowed to stop playing a game of perception vs. reality. One-time NFL doormats who have changed their fortune under second-year coach Tony Dungy, the Bucs proved again Sunday they are not the same team that became synonymous with losing during a decade-plus of futility. Playing with the poise of post-season veterans, rather than upstarts, the Bucs beat the Detroit Lions 20-10 in the NFC wild-card game at Houlihan's Stadium.

In Sunday's early game, the New England Patriots beat the Miami Dolphins 17-3 (reported in yesterday's edition). The victory marked another significant step under Dungy, who inherited a team in 1996 that hadn't finished with a winning record or made the playoffs since 1982. The Bucs won five of their last seven games after a 1-8 start under Dungy, then continued their dramatic turnaround with a 10-6 mark this year that matched the best in franchise history.

Trent Dilfer threw a 9-yard touchdown pass to Horace Copeland, Mike Alstott scored on a 31-yard run and Michael Husted kicked two field goals for Tampa Bay, which hadn't won a playoff game since 1979. The victory sends them to Green Bay next Sunday for a third meeting this season against the defending Super Bowl champion. "If we can match their physical-

ity and their emotion, we can go up there and win," Dilfer said.

The Packers swept the season series between the NFC Central rivals and have won nine of 10 games against Tampa Bay.

A crowd of 73,361 counted down the final seconds in what will be the Bucs' last game in the stadium affectionately known as The Big Sombrero — unless Tampa Bay upsets Green Bay and Minnesota beats San Francisco next week.

The Lions dedicated their post-season to linebacker Reggie Brown, who had spinal neck surgery after being injured in last week's regular-season finale, and wore his "59" on their helmets in tribute.

Detroit also lost quarterback Scott Mitchell to a mild concussion late in the third quarter — he was wheeled off on a stretcher — leaving backup Frank Reich to try to lead the Lions back from a 20-0 deficit.

Sanders, the NFL's co-MVP with Green Bay's Brett Favre, became the third player to rush for more than 2,000 yards in a season this year. But he had only 65 on 18 carries Sunday, the first time he didn't gain at least 100 since Tampa Bay held him to 20 in Week 2.

"Offensively speaking, we never got into any kind of rhythm," Lions coach Bobby Ross said. "Their plan was even simpler than we anticipated. But we never got into the game offensively until the third quarter."

Dilfer's touchdown pass to Copeland capped an 89-yard drive

that lasted nearly nine minutes, and Husted's second field goal made 13-0.

The Bucs wasted an opportunity late in the first half, though, when Warrick Dunn fumbled and Detroit's Robert Porcher recovered at the Lions 14.

The Bucs held a better than 2-1 advantage in time of possession in the opening half, outgaining the Lions 198-52. Sanders had 15 yards on six carries and the Lions hurt themselves with poor special teams play and an interception that set up a field goal.

Tampa Bay played much of the first half in Detroit territory after the Lions' John Jett failed to get off a punt and was tackled at his 40. The Bucs also escaped unscathed when kick returner Karl Williams fumbled inside his 20, but Detroit's Matt Russell couldn't pick up the ball and it squirted out of bounds.

The Lions' woes continued after halftime. Jett's 31-yard punt led to Alstott's TD that forced Ross to decide whether to abandon the running game — and thus, Sanders — and rely on Mitchell's arm.

The quarterback was knocked out of the game when he scrambled and dived head-first for a 2-yard gain at the Bucs 15. Jason Hanson kicked a 33-yard field goal on the next play, then Detroit got a 1-yard TD run from Tommy Vardell in the fourth quarter.

"Unfortunately, we're notorious for slow starts, and it caught up with us," said Lions receiver Herman Moore.



STEPPING LIGHTLY — Bucs QB Trent Dilfer eludes a Lions tackler for a short gain in first-quarter action.

Sunday's box scores

Detroit 0 0 0 3 3-10
Tampa Bay 2 0 7 0-20
First Quarter: TB-FG Husted 22, 5:25. Second Quarter: TB-Copeland 9 pass from Dilfer (Husted kick), 10:24. TB-FG Husted 42, 6:49. Third Quarter: TB-Alstott 31 run (Husted kick), 11:08. Det-FG Hanson 33, 2:28. Fourth Quarter: Det-Husted 1 run (Hanson kick), 7:49.
RUSHING—Detroit, Sanders 18-85, Mitchell 4-20, Brown 1-1, Reich 1-5, Vardell 2-3, Jett 1-1. Tampa Bay, Dunn 12-72, Alstott 11-68, Anthony 1-1, Dilfer 2-0.
PASSING—Detroit, Mitchell 10-25-178, Reich 11-15-129, Tampa Bay, Dilfer 13-20-118.
RECEIVING—Detroit, Morton 7-89, Sanders 5-43, Moore 4-44, Boyd 2-11, Scroggins 1-19, Vardell 1-12, Sloan 1-5, Tampa Bay, Anthony 3-62, Dunn 3-0, R.Thomas 2-86, Copeland 2-14, Williams 1-28, Alstott 1-12, Harris 1-4.
MISSED FIELD GOALS—None.
Miami 0 0 0 3 3-3
New England 0 7 10 0-17
Second Quarter: NE-Brown 24 pass from NE-Collins 40 interception return (Vintrell kick), 14:05. NE-FG Vintrell 22, 1:58. Fourth Quarter: Mia-FG Mars 38, 14:51. A-60.04.
RUSHING—Miami, ... Parmelee ... 9-22. Abdu-Jabbar 5-15, McPhail 1-4, Marino 1-2. Pritchett 1-0 (mars 2). New England, Givens 22-88, Grier 5-15, Bledsoe 2-4, Maggott 1-2.
PASSING—Miami, Marino 17-32-214. New England, Bledsoe 16-32-152.
RECEIVING—Miami, McPhail 5-28, Thomas 3-62, Parmelee 3-13, McDuffie 3-5, Patten 1-4. Jordan 1-11, Dwyer 1-3. New England, Giers 4-27, Conley 4-25, Brown 2-32, Maggott 2-11, Johnson 1-7, Purnell 1-4, Gash 1-3, Galloway 1-2.
MISSED FIELD GOALS—New England, Vintrell 48-(41), 47 (WR).

Playoffs Glance

Wild Cards
Saturday, Jan. 2
Houston 21, New York Giants 22
Denver 21, Jacksonville 17
Sunday
New England 17, Miami 2
Tampa Bay 20, Detroit 10
Divisional Playoffs
Saturday, Jan. 3
New England at Pittsburgh, 7:30 p.m. local time.
Houston at Washington, 11 p.m.
Sunday, Jan. 4
New York at Cleveland, 2:30 p.m.
Denver at Tampa Bay, 11 p.m.
Conference Championships
Saturday, Jan. 5
Sunday, Jan. 5 at 12:00 p.m.
(local)
Pro Bowl
Saturday, Feb. 1 at Houston



On Eilat's North Shore, right at the water's edge

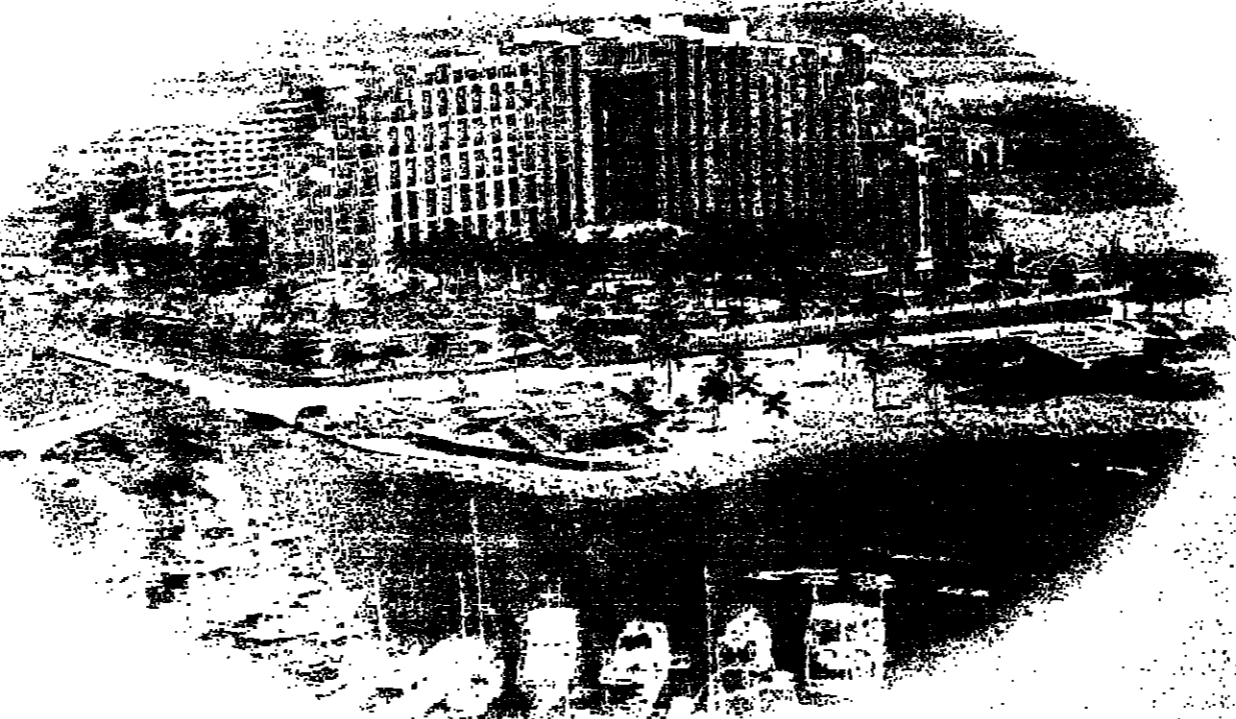
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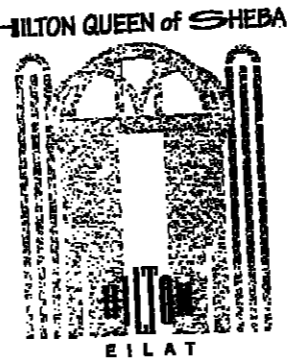


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Graf withdraws from Australian Open

BONN (Reuters) — Steffi Graf has withdrawn from next month's Australian Open, German media reports said yesterday. The reports quoted Graf's manager Hans Engert as saying the former World No. 1, who has not played since a knee operation in June, did not feel certain she was in good enough form to play in the tournament which she has won four times. He said Graf had now decided to postpone her comeback until the Pan-Pacific Open in Tokyo in early February. The tennis world had been eagerly awaiting Graf's appearance at the Australian Open in the hope she would come up against Swiss Martina Hingis who took over the number one position in the German's absence. Graf had held the top spot since August 1995. She has not played a tournament since knee surgery in May and has not entered any of the Australian Open warm-up events. There had been speculation that Graf would enter the Hope Island, Queensland, event — beginning January 4 — under the Women's Tennis Association's "golden wild card" rule, but this is now not going to happen," said tournament director Paul McNamee. Graf is only three grand slam singles victories away from breaking the record of 24 set by Australia's Margaret Court. "Twelve months ago we were thinking it would be only a matter of time before Steffi matched that record but she hasn't won a grand slam in '97 and now there is a new World No. 1 in Martina Hingis who will be very hard for Steffi to overcome," McNamee said. Graf had arthroscopic surgery on her knee in May when it was discovered she had several problems which needed correcting.

Spurs boss may quit over work permit problem

LONDON (AP) — Fitness adviser Fritz Schmid yesterday was denied a work permit to be employed by Tottenham fueling speculation that team manager Christian Gross would quit after only a month in charge and that Juergen Klinsmann would become player-manager. According to the *Evening Standard*, the situation has alerted the Swiss Football Association, which had already targeted Gross to become head coach to the national team. "When I signed my contract, it was on the condition that I could bring Fritz with me," Gross said. Gross relies heavily on Schmid's knowledge of sports medicine and injury rehabilitation. The problem is that Schmid, like Gross, is Swiss and a non-EU citizen and has to get past Britain's tough work permit rules. Meanwhile, speculation was rife in Germany that Klinsmann, re-hired by Tottenham last week and one of the team that tied with Arsenal, might take over from Gross if the Swiss coach left White Hart Lane. Klinsmann has been hired until the end of the season and reportedly is to have talks with Spurs owner Alan Sugar. Klinsmann is a big favorite with the Spurs fans, having scored 29 goals in one season for the club two years ago before he moved to Bayern Munich. He returned to Tottenham after an unsuccessful short spell with Italian club Sampdoria. Gross has been unhappy with the general lack of fitness of many of the Spurs players. Darren Anderton, Les Ferdinand and David Ginola are all injured and unable to play. Gross contends these injuries have been picked up because the players were not fully fit.

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